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THROUGH AMANULLAH'S AFGHANISTAN

A BOOK OF TRAVEL

WITH MORE THAN THIRTY ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP

BY

SORAB K. H. KATRAK

KARACHI

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TO MY PARENTS

"Be grateful unto thy parents in thought and word and deed for all they have done for thee." *Dinkard.*

PREFACE

AFGHANISTAN! What string of varied thoughts pass through our minds when we utter this ancient name? From our childhood we have been associating this name with tyranny, bloodshed, lawlessness, robbery, murders and many similar wild actions; and yet how few of us know what changes Afghanistan had gone through during the time Amanullah Khan held the sway over this wild and barren country?

And yet I hardly dreamt that the same Amanullah about whom I wrote in the Illustrated Weekly of India as under, would be a fallen hero scarcely within three months of my leaving his capital city :—

"Afghanistan as it stands to-day is like two arms of a scale on one side of which are the young Afghans, polished, polite, hospitable and eager to acquire what is considered the best civilization of the present age, ready to brush aside all superstitions, religious dogmas and ancient social manners and customs; whereas the other arm represents the old bigoted, unpolished, primitive Afghans who do not seem to have changed very much from what we have been used to read and hear about them, and who do not want to shake off their old habits, manners and customs. The result can naturally be expected in little occasional tiffs between the old and the new. But a very careful search will reveal the fact that with the stern and diplomatic manner in which H. M.

The King is steering the wheels of his small but United Kingdom and the way in which his honourable consort is helping him, time will not be distant when Afghanistan will claim to stand in the coterie of civilised nations of the world." [1]

But such indeed is the way of the world. The overthrow of the once famous Amanullah, whom the nations vied to outdo in their hospitality and the show of the pomp and power, furnishes us with one more instance of the oft quoted Sufi saying that all in this world is transitory. As Shakespeare says in his Tempest:

"The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherits, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind."

And so the prophetic words have once again proved their worth.

Surely every reader of this book will sympathise with the unfortunate king and his beautiful consort in their present predicament and they may even hope that the history may repeat itself, for was not Abdur Rahman, the grand father of Amanullah, an exile from his own country for over ten years in Russia, and did he not eventually return home a conquering hero to rule over Afghanistan with Iron Hands? Let us hope it will, for the advancement of this isolated country.

1 *The Illustrated Weekly of India. 27th March 1929.*

A word or two of thanks before I end my preface.

Mr. G. K. Nariman, my scholar friend of great renown at Bombay, the first and only Parsi scholar to travel in Afghanistan, has done me honour by consenting to write a foreword to my book. But for the encouragement from him, I would not have ventured to place this maiden effort of mine before the public. I offer him my sincerest thanks for his scholarly and informative foreword to this book as well as for his masterly guidance in preparing the bibliography of Afghanistan.

My special debt of gratitude is due to my revered friend and guide the learned High Priest of the Parsis of Karachi, Dastur Doctor M. N. Dhalla, M.A., Ph. D., whom I owe the informative and useful chapter on Afghanistan and the Parsis ; also general inspiration and assistance in the publication of this book.

My friend Mr. N. M. Billimoria has taken great pains in preparing a bibliography for my book and for rendering sundry other assistance in the work for which I extend to him my grateful thanks.

In the end I cannot help mentioning the great disappointment that was caused to me by the loss of some of my very valuable photographs taken at Kabul and other places in Afghanistan. These were given to my friend Mr. N. D. Mallick to be carried back to India, ere I returned from my tour round

Kashmir, but this gentleman met with a mishap on the way to Ghazni and lost his luggage containing, besides other things, the above said photographs which would have been of special interest to the readers of this book. I live in hopes of finding them somehow some day as Afghans hope for something to turn up somehow by solemnly muttering INSHALLAH !

Deena Katrak Lodge,
Clifton,
KARACHI. (India).
September, 1929.

Sorab K. H. Katrak.

INTRODUCTION

AFGHANISTAN OF AMANULLAH KHAN

Afghanistan before 1919 was hardly open to the civilised world. With the appearance of Shah Amanullah began a new period in the history of the country. It was hailed as heralding a dawn. Unfortunately with the departure of King Amanullah Khan from the Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay, where he lived after his abdication as honoured guest of the Government of India, for Italy on the 22nd of June, that epoch closes, if, as is fervently hoped, temporarily. Thus the annals of the country have an oasis of eight years between the vast desert of semi-barbarism which preceeded 1919 and the civil war which has ensued, betokening the country "back to dark despotism in the name of religion." The friends of Afghanistan cherish the ardent aspiration that the second period of obscurity may prove an abbreviated one.

A large portion of the present Afghanistan was considered Zoroastrian territory. The country abounds in ruins of Parsi period of domination. The works of orientalists like Niedermayer testify to it (see our Bulletin of the Iran League). The names of several rivers of Afghanistan have been identified by Sir Aurl Stein from *Farwardin Yesht* of the Avesta. Elsewhere have been proved the identity of many holy mountain peaks enumerated in the Pahlavi *Bundahish.*

The Buddhist period of Afghanistan is pre-eminently represented by the ruins of monuments

scattered over the entire face of the country. During most of the Moghul period (1526-1707) Afghanistan was governed as a province by the deputees of the Emperors of Delhi. The principal cities Kabul, Ghazni, Kandahar, and Herat have been considered each a key to the adventurous foreigner in Central Asia lured by the riches of Ind. There was an intermediate epoch of the Shahi Kings of Kabul of Brahmanic faith.

Ancient Afghans were called Pashtawans; their language Pashtu. It is more akin to the ancient Persian than the modern Persian of Iran, with its copious admixture of Arabic. Herodotus mentions the country whose original name was possibly *Ashvaghan,* or Land of Horses. Firdausi is not without references to the heroes of Kabul and Zabul and historic facts buried in poetic legend. Up to the introduction of Islam the culture of Afghanistan was Buddhist and Zoroastrian. Zoroaster preached his gospel at Balkh which has enjoyed remarkable celebrity as a renowned centre in touch with the tripple civilization of China, India and Iran.

On the 20th February 1919, King Habibullah Khan, the father of Amanullah Khan, had halted in his tour at Jalalabad with a regiment. The tents of the Amir were sorrounded by those of his brothers, sons and grandees.

Towards midnight the report of a gun broke the silence. It had issued from the tent of the Amir. All rushed to it and found the Amir assassinated.

Over the murder of King Habibullah lies a shroud of impenetrable mystery. How Nassurallah, brother of late Amir, aimed at the crown ; how he wrote to Amanullah, the then Governor of Kabul, to recognise him sovereign; how the latter desired to consult the nation, is all a matter of history.

Once elevated to the throne by the will of his people Amanullah threw himself body, heart and soul into the task of redeeming his motherland from ignorance, sloth, corruption, bigotry, and partial subordination to the foreign paramount power from which it received a yearly subsidy of 12 raised to 18 lakhs in lieu of an undertaking to have no relations with foreign states save through Britain. Amanullah is the third son of Habibullah and was born at Kabul in 1891. The one aim of his rule was to see Afghanistan free. He married the daughter of a journalist who edited *Siraj-ul-Akhbar*, Mahamud Tarzi, a personality without parallel at home. He had ample share in the making of modern Afghanistan. He was for many years in foreign countries. The young King was greatly influenced by his father-in-law.

To this Mahamud Beg Tarzi is partly due the credit of initiating modernization of Afghanistan. His father Ghulam Muhammad Khan Tarzi was a descendant, in direct line of Sardar Rahmdil Khan, brother of Amir Dost Muhammad. His mother was of the Sadozai clan. During the reign of Abdurrahman Khan, Ghulam Muhammad Khan was accused

of conspiracy and high treason. He was banished into exile with his whole family. They established themselves in Damuscas. Here Mahamud Tarzi, quite a young man at that time, married a Syrian lady of noble origin. The union had a numerous progeny, 20 children in all. After the death of Ghulam Muhammad Khan Tarzi, amnesty was granted by Amir Habibullah Khan to the members of his family and Mahamud Tarzi returned to Kabul. He is a man of great literary attainments and thoroughly conversant with the Eastern languages, Pashtu, Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Urdu. The present writer conversed with him and noted his fluent Hindustani at Paghman. Mahamud Tarzi not only founded and edited the *Siraj-ul-Akhbar* but also found time to translate, from the Arabic and Turkish versions, several novels by Jules Verne. He is likewise author of original works.

Of Mahamud Tarzi's children the colonel Abddut Tawwab Khan Tarzi, after having for several years followed the course of the military school of Saint-Cyr in France, was recently appointed instructor in the military academy at Kabul. Another son, Abdul Wahhab Khan, has returned from the University of Oxford. Mahamud Tarzi's eldest daughter is married to Sardar Inayatullah Khan, the eldest son of the late Amir Habibullah Khan. His third daughter is the Queen Consort of Amanullah Khan.

The first act of the new sovereign was to send a letter to the Viceroy of India, proclaiming the

independence of Afghanistan and determination to conduct its own foreign relations. This led to a war. The British occupied Dakka. General Nadirkhan assembled his troops and passing Thull claimed to have penetrated India. The situation lasted for four months and the Treaty of Rawalpindi was concluded. The Anglo-Indian army was accounted vanquished and the event was recorded on pillars near the arch of triumph at Paghman, the summer seat of Amanullah. The peace delegation was presided over by Mahamud Tarzi. Preparations for the peace began on July 20th and on 8th August the signatures were affixed by the plenipotentiaries.

Afghanistan now concluded direct treaties with other European powers, Belgium, Turkey, the Soviet Russia. A very curious clause of the treaty with the latter provides for "*Un Subside annuel de un million de roubles* or, *argent ou cuivre, sera fourni comme aide a l'Afghanistan.*" It was signed at Moscow on February 28, 1921.

Modern Afghanistan is a country of Islamic civilization. The majority of its population is of Iranian origin. Persia always exercised preponderating influence on Afghanistan. Among the sources of civilising influence must be mentioned the Islamic *Shariat.* For while the Zoroastrian and the Buddhistic codes of ethics were long extinct in the country, of the other pre-Islamic cultures only a remnant of paganism survived in parts of the country. It was overcome by the predecessor of Amanullah who forcibly converted the people of Kafristan to Islam and

named the province Nuristan. The Islamic *Shariat* or canon law distinguishes rather vaguely between secular and spiritual affairs. On the other hand it preaches universal fraternity among the believers. The Afghan frame of mind, emerging from the anterior gloom, was not dazzled by the westernization of Amanullah. The ground was prepared, however crudely, by Habibullah, whose *harem* put on European costume. There is no lack of reliable books of travel mostly by English author—adventurous for the pre-Amanullah age; for the Amanullah regime the authorities are Raymond Furon, Trinker and Foucher. The Afghan nation largely responded to the will of the autocrat Amanullah who ruled as a monarch that had himself limited his sovereign prerogatives.

The Press during these nine years have been a mirror, to a very large extent, of the Afghan soul. It has been studied with accuracy by two authorities, both of them Russian,—Mr. Bogdanov so well known by his researches in the Avesta and who was in Kabul for several years at the French legation and by Mr. Nikitine (*La Mentalitte Afghane moderne*). If spirituous liquors were prohibited admittance into the country in accordance with the *shariat*, import of articles of luxury is forbidden on patriotic grounds. The Musalman mentality of the orthodox Afghans can be judged by the treatment according to the Quadianis, who also profess Islam. The progressive Moslems of Afghanistan stand for unqualified sane modernism.

The question of the emancipation of women has greatly agitated the country. The Islamic law

gives much greater liberty to women than is usually imagined. While primitive Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism or Zoroastrianism hardly limit the number of man's legitimate wives, Islam fixes them at four. The monogamy of the modern West rests on no scriptures. The humiliating position of women in Islam is of later origin just as the elevation of womanhood in most other creeds is of relative recent growth. A woman's *role* varies according to the Musalman community, in which she lives. Under the Moslem nomads of Turkestan she was as unrestrained as man himself and did not have to put on the *paranja* or veil. This was so before the Soviet rule. To-day in large cities like Samarkand women stand on the same social level as men. Disabilities on women were only partial in these territories adjacent to Afghanistan even before the establishment of the Soviet Republics of Turkomanistan, Uzbegistan and Tajikistan. Hence the reforms in this direction were not quite the springing of a surprise. But the new Afghan mentality wavered between the Sylla of the *shariat* on the one hand and the Charybdis of nationalism or *Afghaniat* on the other. Islam recognises no nationality. It transcends all political and ethnic barriers. It has no national ideals. All the nations professing Islam are divided, according to the *shariat*, into *darul Islam*, composed of the believers and the *darul Harab*, consisting of those who deny the creed. The task of the patriot is to reconcile these two apparently conflicting principles,—nationality and religion. The nationalist sentiment acquired predominance when the relations with Britain suffered rupture.

The young nationalist Afghan, like the other members of the Islamic World, has had resort to an Arabic term to express the concept of nation, —*millat*. In reality it signifies a religious community. It proves the opposition of ideals between nation and religion. As regards the term *watan* for native land, another Arabic word, adopted in all Islamic countries, it denotes the nomadic society of its origin. For it means only a place where camels or cattle foregather. Mr. Nikitine quotes a passionate poem written on *watan* in an Afghan paper. It states that a country under subjection to another is like a tree devoid of roots. As against the comparatively new ideals of brotherhood inculcated by the *shariat* and nationality, the disease of today, there has survived among the Afghans from remote antiquity a peculiar institution. It is purely Aryan. It goes back to the days anterior to Buddhism. It is called Jirga or a democratic assembly of people. Here are deliberated upon and decided the various problems of the country, affecting religion, politics, economics.

Alongside of the Press various Government bureaus connected with education throw light on the spirit of the reformed Afghan mentality. The *Darul Talif* or, the department of publication, which is occupied with the compilation of educational works had its *Majmue Askri*. Economy was represented by *Majella Sarvet*. There were some ten periodicals of which *Amane Afghan* was the best known. The better class of periodicals drew their inspiration from Egypt, Turkey, Persia. Anglo-Indian papers

were cited copiously, almost always with exacerbation. The *Statesman* and *Civil and Military Gazette* came in for castigations like "an absolute lie" spread over four spacious columns (Bogdanov in *Islamic Culture.*) Latterly the *Anis* became a frank critic.

"Those who wish to live", says an Afghan journalist "must have two qualifications, the pen and the sword." Public opinion was sufficiently cultivated to start what was in fullness of time to correspond to a university. There were warm discussions as to the subjects to be taught there. Was it to be the centre of a revival of Avisena, Razi, Gazali, Ibn Khaldun? Was it to be unadulterated occidental science? Whatever its programme, the need of a seat of learning was felt beyond all doubt. There was simultaneously the question of the acquisition of knowledge at home or abroad. Certain people were for the education at home. King Amanullah was for combining instruction with travel. His partisans relied on the Islamic traditional dictum which bids you go even to China in search of knowledge.

Then came the problem of the linguistic medium. Persian so long the language of court and culture, was regarded as alien idiom. Pashtu of Iranian origin, was looked up to as the national tongue. At one time Amanullah was inclined towards its adoption. Morgenstrine, who gives as many dialects to Afghanistan as are found in an answering area of India, no doubt upset the calculations of the extreme patriots. The King delivered often his impassioned and impromtu speeches in Pashtu. The crowds hung on his lips.

Discoursing on poetry and art, an Afghan paper quoted Taine and his view that the world is conquered by poets and that nothing can resist the charm of a work of art. The Afghan Military Review was the reverse of a militant and bellicose pieces of journalism. It kept its readers in touch with the technique of war and multiplied avowals touching Afghanistans resolve to secure a period of political tranquility. Aggression was a negation of the young Afghan's creed. It was peace which was essential for the development of the resources of the country. The question of hygiene was not neglected. Much stress was laid even in the war office Bulletins on the position of women in society. The young Afghan officers received their lessons of gallantry and chivalry in the columns of the military review. In town planning, Afghanistan took as its model no Indian city. The first to have a municipality, *the Baladiya* was Mazare Shariff, much nearer to the Soviet orbit of influence.

In the midst of the profound transformation of the country the mass of the populace was spontaneously drawn to the one section of the celebration of the annual Independence Day, dealing with the Agricultural exhibition. The King put on his national dress and ploughed the first furrow. This moving rustic ceremony reaches back to high antiquity. It is in the Avesta, as a matter of fact, that we find the intense attachment to land and glorification of agriculture, the sanctification of tillage, as an article of faith. The Afghan King's initial operation as ploughman was a living emblamatic relic of forgotten

Zoroastrianism. Hence my repeated belief that Afghanistan has as much sentimental claim on the Parsis as Persia itself.

The vital importance of Afghanistan to India as Mrs. Annette Beveidge shows is obvious from the fact that all the great invaders marched through the North Western passes into India. Alexander of Macedon moved from Charikar to Charsadda in 327 B. C. The Sultan Mahamud Ghazni in the 10th century came down the Kurram Valley. Mahamud of Ghor who was murdered in 1206 followed nearly the same route. Chingiz Khan in the 14th century proceeded across Balkh, Bamian, Peshawar and Bajaur. Timur in the 13th century from Samarkand serged through the Andarab Valley. Babar in 1519 penetrated the Khaibar pass. Nadirshah in 1738 took the route of Kabul, Khaibar, Indus.

Afghanistan that I saw was improved upon during the interval after which it was visited by Mr. Sorab K. H. Katrak of Karachi. The impressions of this gentleman were obtained when the country was probably at its zenith in the Amanullah regime. To me the modernization did not give the appearance of a mashroom growth. The set back that the country has suffered is not irretrievable to the reasonable optimist, though a very severe one it is. Any way it was not fanaticism of the reactionaries but the treachery of the people who abused religion to serve their selfish ends, which brought about the catastrophe. Unbelievers themselves, the miscreants exploited the cheap religious furor of imbecile zealots. The struc-

ture has tumbled down but the foundations appear to have been laid with forethought and prescience. King Amanullah has created a mentality which will impell the young Afghans to reassert themselves, after the temporary blast of infidel exploiters of religion has spent its diobolical force. And Afghanistan has yet true sons like the Minister Hadi who clung to the last to the fallen ruler,—among the faithless faithful only he.

G. K. Nariman.

Mazgaon P. O.
Bombay.

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Amanullah Khan, Ex-King of Afghanistan

THROUGH AMANULLAH'S AFGHANISTAN

CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHY OF AFGHANISTAN

"Afghanistan is situated in Central Asia with an estimated area of 245,000 square miles including Badakshan and Kafiristan, with a population of about five million souls. It is bounded on the north by Russian Turkestan, on the west by Persia and on the east and south by Kashmir, India and Baluchistan. The chief importance of this country in modern times is due to its position as a buffer state wedged in as it is between the two great Empires of Asiatic Russia and British India. The definite boundaries of Afghanistan were determined at various periods. The Russian Afghan Boundary Commission of 1884-86 resulted in the delimitation and mapping of the northern frontiers; the Palmer Commission settled its northern border and finally the Perso-Baluch Commission of 1904-05 defined its western face." [1]

Afghanistan is largely a country of mountains and deserts, but there are wide tracts, highly irrigated and most productive, where fruit is grown in such abundance as to become an important item of its export trade. The following extract from the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone's "Account of the Kingdom of Caubul," published in 1815, though it may be considered to-day a little exaggerated, yet in the main can be termed quite true as regards fruits in Afghanistan are concerned :—

1 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 13th Edition.

"The people derive a great luxury from the prodigious abundance of fruit. At Caubul, grapes are dear when they sell more than a farthing a pound; pomegranates are a little more than a half penny a pound; apples sell at two hundred pounds a rupee (£ 1-4-4) two sorts of apricots are equally cheap, and the dearer sorts are less than a half penny a pound; peaches are dearer, but quinces and plums are cheap; and melons much cheaper; grapes often bear scarce any price, and the coarse sort, which is exported with so much care to India, is sometimes given to cattle. Nuts of all kinds are very cheap, and walnuts, with which the hills north of Caubul are covered, sell at two thousand for a rupee. The price of vegetables is also extremely low. The smallest piece of copper money, much less than a half penny, purchases ten pounds of spinage, twenty five of cabbage, and of carrots, turnips, pumpkins, or cucumbers. Coriander seeds, turmeric and ginger also sell extremely cheap. Ice or rather snow, is to be had in Caubul, during the summer for a mere trifle. It is dearer at Candahar, but still within the reach of the poorest people. A favourite food at that season is fulodeh, a jelly strained from boiled wheat, and eaten with the expressed juice of fruits and ice, to which cream also is sometimes added."[1]

The Afghans are expert agriculturists and make profitable use of all natural resources of water supply as practical engineers, their only rivals being the Chinese.

1 The Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone, *An account of the kingdom of Caubul*, London, 1815, p. 261.

The climate of Afghanistan is very changing indeed. In his commentaries the Emperor Babar writes: "The cold and hot countries are very near to each other at this place. One day's journey from Caubul you may find a place where snow never falls; and, in two hours journey, a place where the snow scarcely ever melts. The air is delightful. I do not believe there is another place like Caubul in the world. One cannot sleep there in summer without a posteen. (a) In winter, though there is so much snow, the cold is not excessive. Samarcand and Tauris are famous for their climate; but they are not to be compared to Caubul. The fruits of cold climates; grapes, pomegranates, apricots, apples, quinces, peaches, pears, plums, almonds, and walnuts are abundant. (b) I planted a cherry tree myself at Caubul, it grew very well, and was thriving when I left it. Oranges and citrons come in plenty from Lughmaun." [1]

Whereas Ghazni, Bamian and Paghman were beautifully cool even in the month of August, I found Kabul, Jalalabad and Kandahar rather hot during the day time. During the winter season which starts in Afghanistan from the middle of October, it snows heavily and many parts of Afghanistan are so cold that it becomes unbearable to stay there. It is recorded in history that in 1750 when Ahmed Shah Abdally was retreating from Persia in

[1] *op. cit.* p. 261.

one night at Kafar Kala he lost 18,000 men through frost bite.

There is a close comparison between Afghanistan and Scotland. "In both lands we find the centre of the country occupied by an agglomeration of mountain ranges shading away into hilly undulations which run down to broad, well watered plains and wastes like Registan and Dasht-i-Margo. The climate, is much the same; a clan system, governed by predatory chiefs is practically the same in both countries. There is a river running right along the northern border of Afghanistan for a distance of 330 miles called Oxus, or Amu Daria, which greatly affects the life of the entire country. It has its rise in the Pamir region and falls into the Sea of Aral after running a course of more than 1,400 miles. Its navigation has been the subject of much surmise since 1875, when a steamer succeeded in steaming up as far as Nukus. The Russian Government equipped a small flotilla, which still patrols it under Bolshevist auspices. The journey between Patta Hissar and Charjui takes from seven to ten days according to the size of the vessel."[1]

In parts of the country are to be found Mineral resources such as Salt, Sulphur, iron, lapis-lazuli, and ruby.

"The largest Afghan towns have the following varying population: Kabul, 100,000; Kandahar, 60,000; Herat, 121,000; Mazar-i-Sharief, 46,000. The entire country is divided administratively into nine equal parts. The five major provinces are those

1 Sardar Ikbal Ali Shah, *Afghanistan of the Afghans*, London, 1928, pp. 9-11.

of Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-i-Sharief and Kataghan-Badakhshan ; while the four minor divisions are Jalalabad, Khost, Farah, and Maimena." [1]

It is a well-known fact that the climate has a great bearing on the temperament and physique as well as religion of a nation. Mrs. Lilian A. Starr in her "Tales of Tirah and Lesser Tibet," describes the Afghans as :

"Fierce and lawless, wild and masterless, yet in their reckless fashion brave—true highlanders with an inborn love of fighting, and a pluck and hardiness one cannot but admire." [2]

Elphinstone in his "Account of the Kingdom of Caubul" says about the Afghans :

"The Afghans themselves exult in the free spirit of their institutions. Those who are little under the royal authority, are proud of their independence, which those under the King (though not exposed to the tyranny common in every other country in the east) admire, and fain would imitate. They all endeavour to maintain, that 'all Afghans are equal,' which, though it is not, nor ever was true, still shows their notions and their wishes. I once strongly urged to a very intelligent old man of the tribe of Meeankhail, the superiority of a quiet and secure life under a powerful monarch, to the discord, the alarms, and the blood, which they owed

1 *op. cit.* pp. 17, 18.
2 p. 39.

to their present system. The old man replied with great warmth, and thus concluded an indignant harangue against arbitrary power, 'We are content with discord, we are content with alarms, we are content with blood, but we will never be content with a master.'"[1]

The following description of the character of the Afghans in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, though it may not apply to the educated Afghans yet in the main may be described as true :—

"The Afghans, inured to bloodshed from childhood, are familiar with death, and audacious in attack, but easily discouraged by failure ; excessively turbulent and unsubmissive to law or discipline ; apparently frank and affable in manner, specially when they hope to gain some object, but capable of the grossest brutality when that hope ceases. They are unscrupulous in perjury, treacherous, vain and insatiable, passionate in vindictiveness, which they will satisfy at the cost of their own lives and in the most cruel manner. Nowhere is crime committed on such trifling grounds, or with such general impunity, though when it is punished the punishment is atrocious. Among themselves the Afghans are quarrelsome, intriguing and distrustful ; estrangements and affrays are of constant occurrence ; the traveller conceals and misrepresents the time and direction of his journey. The Afghan is by breed and nature a bird

1 *op. cit.* 174.

of prey. If from habit and tradition he respects a stranger within his threshold, he yet considers it legitimate to warn a neighbour of the prey that is afoot, or even to overtake and plunder his guest after he has quitted his roof. The repression of crime and the demand of taxation he regards alike as tyranny. The Afghans are eternally boasting of their lineage, their independence and their prowess. They look on the Afghans as the first nations, and each man looks on himself as the equal of any Afghan." [1]

The educated Afghans are very polite and polished in their ways and look so mild that one hardly can compare them with the wilder tribes of the Afghans, of which we have been hearing so much, but the former are smaller in number, naturally.

Amongst the products of Afghanistan, carpets made near Herat engage our special attention. Elphinstone says, "There is a kind made near Heraut which excels all others, I ever saw; they are made of wool, but so fine and glossy, and dyed with such brilliant colours, that they appear to be of silk; carpets of highly wrought shawl are also used but this piece of magnificence must be very rare from the enormous expense.

"Mullah Jaffer of Seestaun had a shawl carpet of great size, with separate pieces for sitting on, which was bespoke for Shauh Mahmood, and which was bought for a quarter of its price after that prince was dethroned. Moollah

1 *op. cit.*, 13th Edition.

Jaffer asked £ 10,000 for it, which he said was far below its value : he intended to try to sell it at the courts of Persia and Russia and if he failed to cut it up and sell it in pieces to the Turks." [1]

There are some beautiful horses to be seen in various parts of Afghanistan and I had a great mind to purchase one or two for myself but I was told their export is entirely forbidden and the only way I could bring them out to India would be to ride on them all the way to Peshawar, a task I did not think worthwhile performing.

1 *op. cit.* p. 268.

CHAPTER II

AFGHANISTAN AND THE PARSIS

Afghanistan, more than any other part of Persia, was the earliest seat of the ancient Parsi dynasties of the Pishdadians and Kaianians and of Zoroastrian culture and civilization. Eastern Iran was the seat of pre-Zoroastrian and Zoroastrian activities as western and southern regions of the country were during the Achaemenian and Sasanian periods.

The first chapter of the Vendidad enumerates some of the most important cities created by Ahura Mazda. Bakhdhi, later Balkh, is the chief capital city spoken of as "the city of lofty banners floating from high walls." It had risen to such eminence that it won the proud title of "Mother of Cities." Masudi perpetuates the Avestan tradition when he speaks of Balkh as beautiful. The popular epithet by which it comes to be known at later period is Bami, "the exalted or shining." Tradition variously puts forth the names of several Pishdadian and Kaianian kings as its reputed founders. Zoroaster is associated with Bactria, the Greek form of Avestan Bakhdhi and Old Persian Bakhtri, by both the modern and Greek writers. The classical writers speak of Zoroaster as the Magian King of Bactria. After ten years of futile prophetic propaganda, the prophet ultimately met with success at the royal court of Gushtasp, the then ruling king at Balkh. It was at his court that the messenger of Ahura Mazda preached his new faith and won over the king and his royal consort to his sacred cause. According to Firdausi and other

Muslim writers the sacred fire Nubahar was established at Balkh and when Lohrasp abdicated his throne in favour of his son Gushtasp, he retreated to this temple to pass his days in prayer and meditation. And it was in the holy precincts of this temple that Lohrasp was done to death and the sacred fire extinguished, when the Turanians stormed Balkh while Iran was engaged in the holy war with Arjasp. The prophet himself was stabbed in the same city. Balkh continued to be in the hands of the Iranians upto the downfall of the Sasanians in the middle of the seventh century.

The modern capital Kabul is known to the Avestan writers as Vaekereta and is known by its Pahlavi name Kavul in the treaties Shatroiha-i-Airan, or Cities of Iran. The Vendidad speaks of the river Haetumant, modern Helmand, the chief river of Afghanistan. Saoshyant or the Zoroastrian Saviour, who according to tradition, will appear at the Millennium to usher in the Renovation of the world, is to be born in the region of the lake Kansaoya, modern Hamun. Zoroastrianism prevailed in Afghanistan upto the downfall of the Sasanian empire in the middle of the seventh century. The spade of the explorer has yet to reach the Bactrian soil which was the seat of the Kaianians in the earliest period of the history of the country, and it may be hoped that some day, under more settled times, Archaeological finds in the shape of some inscriptions or tablets, pottery or bricks, stone or

bronze implements, may throw some light on the history of that remote period.

Zabulistan and Seistan figure most prominently as the home of the warrior heroes of the House of Sam. Zal had married Rodabeh, the beautiful daughter of Mihrab, the King of Kabul, and Rustom the matchless hero, was born unto them. The heroes of Zabul were the constant supporters of the kings and peoples of Iran. They had risen to such power by their prowess and patriotic service as to be king-makers. Sam and Zal and Rustom and other valiant members of the illustrious House fought and died for them.

Historically speaking, Afghanistan in its earliest period of history has as great an importance for the Parsis as Persia. [1]

1 See also J. J. Modi. *The Afghanistan of the Amir and the Ancient Mazdayasnans* in *Asiatic Papers*, Part III. pp. 215-224. Bombay, 1927.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN

Scholars have tried in vain to trace the genealogy of the mixed conglomeration of nationalities that form the people of Afghanistan. The Afghans themselves trace their genealogy from different sources. The Durani Afghans call themselves Ben-i-Israel (children of Israel) and insist on their descent from the tribes who were carried away captives from Palastine to Medea by King Nebuchadnezzar. They trace themselves from King Saul, who they say, had a son called Jeremiah, from whose son Afghana they call themselves Afghans. They further state that a pious man called Kais was sent in deputation to Mahmud who had just declared himself the Prophet of Islam and who soon converted Kais into a Mahommedan and he in his turn on his return to his country turned the whole tribe into Mahommedans. On the contrary others have a tradition that they are descended from Sulehman or Solomon, whereas some believe they are descended from the Egyptian Pharaohs, while some others trace their genealogy still further and believe themselves to be the descendants of Zohak, the legendary usurper King of Persia, depicted in the great Persian Epic, Shah Namah, the beautiful composition of Firdausi. This king is supposed to have had two snakes hanging from each of his shoulders who were never appeased until they were given each a brain of a man every day which resulted in Zohak killing so many of his subjects that they eventually rose in a rebellion under a blacksmith, Kavah who

ultimately joined forces with King Faridun who defeated Zohak and imprisoned him for life. However, several European scholars are inclined to give credence to the belief that the Afghans are really Ben-i-Israel from the fact that many of the men and women in that country possess remarkable Jewish types and features.

However, leaving the task of genealogy of the Afghans to the scholars, we know for certain that from very ancient times Afghanistan has been the seat of wars and upheavels. Alexander the Great, Timur, the Lame, Mahmud of Ghazni, Babar, the first Mogul Emperor, Nadirshah, the Persian, and Jengiz Khan, all in their turn have marched through Afghanistan on to their campaigns in India. After the death of Timur, the Lame, who not only possessed Afghanistan but a greater portion of Northern India, his Kingdom fell to pieces and there were quarrels and bickerings between his twenty-seven sons and between the leaders of several small and big tribes of that country; the offshoot of which was that somewhere in 1800 Shah Shuja proclaimed himself ruler of Afghanistan. It is but natural that the British should expect the rulers in Afghanistan to be friendly with them with a view to prevent the other great power on the North, viz. Russia from encroaching upon the borders of India through Afghanistan. As such in 1809, in consequence of the intrigues of Napoleon Bonaparte with Persia, the British sent a mission to the court of Shah Shuja headed by the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone, subsequently, Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay.

This was the first time the Afghans ever made acquaintance with Englishmen. The mission was well received and after a short stay in Afghanistan returned successfully to India. Things went fairly smoothly till 1836 when Dost Mahommed Khan put himself at the head of the country of the Afghans. In 1837 the Persian seige of Herat and the proceedings of Russia created uneasiness and Lieut. Alexander Burns (afterwards Sir Alexander Burns) who had visited Kabul on his way to Bokhara in 1832, was sent by the Governor-General in India as resident to Dost Mahommed's Court at Kabul in 1837. But the terms which the Amir sought were not conceded by the British Indian Government and as such it was resolved to re-establish Shah Shuja who had been long a refugee in the British Territory in India.

This resulted in the First Afghan War. Sir John Keen with an army of 21,000 men advanced through the Bolan Pass on to Kandahar and took that city with practically no opposition and Shah Shuja was crowned in his grand father's Mosque in April 1839. Ghazni was reached on the 25th July and the gate of the city was blown open and the place was taken by storm. Dost Mahommed, finding his troops deserting him, fled to the Hindu Kush and Shah Shuja entered the capital on August 7th 1839. The result was naturally supposed to be successful and Sir John Keen, who was subsequently made a Peer, returned to India with a considerable part of the forces, leaving behind 8,000 men besides the Shah's forces with Sir W. Macnaghten as envoy and

Sir Alexander Burns as his colleague. Shah Shuja began collecting taxes from the Afghans and raising soldiers from among the troops. As it can naturally be supposed, a freedom loving people born with mountain spirit in them, would not brook interference by a foreign power and as such they rose in rebellion in 1841 and killed Sir Alexander Burns and his soldiers. Akbar Khan, the son of Dost Mahommed, who had put himself at the head of the Afghans called a conference in December 23rd of the same year to which Sir W. Macnaghten was invited to settle the terms, but was murdered by the Prince's own hands. On the 6th January 1842 after a convention to evacuate the country had been signed, the British garrison still numbering 14,500 soldiers of whom 690 were Europeans with some 12,000 followers marched out of the Afghan camp. The winter was severe, the troops were demoralised, the march was a mass of confusion, so that the force was finally overwhelmed in the pass of Jug-Dalak between Kabul and Jalalabad. Of those who left Kabul only one by name Dr. Brydon was able to reach Jalalabad wounded and half dead to carry the tale of woe to his comrades there. This naturally resulted in the British avenging themselves on the Afghans for those foul murders.

General Knott with General Pollock and General Sale, retook several cities of Afghanistan and after dismantling Ghazni and destroying the citadel and central bazaar of Kabul, finally evacuated Afghanistan in December 1842.

In 1868, Shere Ali Khan became the ruler of Afghanistan. He seemed to be more friendly toward the British than his predecessors and in 1869 a meeting was arranged at Ambala where Lord Mayo met him and made a peace treaty by which Shere Ali Khan was acknowledged to be the Ruler of Afghanistan and the British agreed to keep him independent in his territory and to give him every help in case of foreign aggression. On his part, Shere Ali Khan agreed to remain friendly with the British. In 1873, when Russians took Khiva and threatened to proceed on the Afghan borders, Shere Ali became nervous and applied to the British for help by virtue of the treaty made in 1869 at Ambala. Somehow the help did not come, due probably to Lord Clarendon having been solemnly promised by the Russians to treat Afghanistan as a neutral country and to leave it unmolested and as such Shere Ali's fears were considered rather imaginary. Shere Ali, however, took this attitude of the British to mean that they had no intention of keeping their promise and so he openly made overtures to the Russians with the result that the Russian Government, to counteract the interference of England with their advance on Constantinople, sent an envoy to Kabul with power to make a treaty with the Amir. The British immediately notified Shere Ali from India that a mission would be deputed to Kabul; but he demurred to receiving it and when the British envoy had to return from the Afghan frontier, hostilities were proclaimed by the Viceroy in November 1878 and the Second Afghan War began.

Sir Donald Stuart's force marching through Baluchistan across the Bolan Pass entered Kandahar with practically no resistance while another army passed through the Khyber Pass and took up positions at Jalalabad and other places on the direct road to Kabul. A third force under Sir Frederick Roberts marched upto the high pass leading out of the Kurram into the interior of Afghanistan. These combined forces routed Shere Ali from Kabul who fled to the northern provinces where he died at Mazar-i-Sharif in February 1879. In the course of the next six months there was much desultory skirmishing between the tribes and the British troops who defeated various attempts to dislodge them from the positions they had taken up. But the sphere of British military operations was not materially extended. It was seen that the further they advanced, the more difficult would become their eventual retirement, and the problem was to find a successor to Shere Ali who would be friendly toward the British. In the meantime, Yakub Khan, one of the sons of Shere Ali informed the British that he had succeeded his father at Kabul and accordingly a peace treaty was made at Gandamak in May 1879 by which Yakub Khan was recognised as the Amir and certain outlying tracts of Afghanistan were transferred to the British Government. The Amir placed in its hands the establishment of a British Envoy at Kabul receiving in return a guarantee against foreign aggression. In spite of this amicable settlement, in September 1879, Sir Louis Cavagnari, the British Envoy, was massacred at Kabul along with his staff and escort, and the entire

fabric of friendly alliance went to pieces. A fresh expedition was instantly dispatched across the Shutargarden Pass under Sir Frederick Roberts (Lord Roberts) who defeated the Afghans at Charasia near Kabul and entered the city in October. Yakub Khan who had surrendered was sent to India and the British Army remained in military occupation of the District around Kabul until December 1879 when there was another rebellion which however was put down. The British now began to look out for another suitable ruler in Afghanistan who would be prepared to keep peace with them and their eyes were turned to Abdur Rahman, the son of the late Amir Shere Ali's elder brother, who had been an exile for ten years with the Russians. He came back in 1880 across the Oxus and gradually began establishing himself in the northern provinces of Afghanistan. Tribe after tribe was conquered by him till he had made himself practically the ruler of Afghanistan. Meanwhile negotiations were being skilfully carried on with him by the British who eventually acknowledged him as the Amir of Afghanistan and he was proclaimed to be the ruler of the Afghans. A peace was made, which lasted long, by virtue of which he was to receive annually from the British twelve lakhs of Rupees, subsequently raised to Eighteen lakhs, in return for which the Amir promised to be friendly with the British and refer to them any question regarding foreign aggression. The British, on the other hand, promised to help him in case of any foreign encroachment on his territory. It would take a volume to describe the various activities of Amir Abdur Rahman who, till his

death on the first of October 1901, proved himself a faithful friend of the British. I might, however, touch on one or two points pertaining to his life.

His punishments were very severe, indeed. Robbers and thieves used to have their hands cut off and the stumps dipped into boiling oil. The following from "Through the heart of Afghanistan" by Emil Trinkler may be of interest to the readers.

"During our stay in Kabul we hired a stall whose owner was an old Afghan. He had previously been guilty of some offence, but his punishment had been to have his eyes sewn up. How this cruel process was carried out one can easily imagine, but that a surgical needle was not used goes without saying; later the eyelids were again cut open. He wore a large pair of horn rimmed, smoked spectacles, at one time as a protection to the eyes and then to hide his disfigured eyes. Thornton tells us another interesting story in his book, "Notes from an Afghan Scrap Book." A certain baker was one day brought up before the Amir, (Abdur Rahman) for selling bread under weight. On that particular day the Amir happened to be in a good frame of mind; he called the baker an impostor and then said to him, "No man can make headway in this world unless he is honest; go and work according to the words of Koran." A few weeks later the same man was brought up before the King for the same complaint. On this occasion the Amir said, "You are not only a deceiver but a rogue. You will pay a fine of 3,000 rupees, 3,000 annas, 3,000 pies (about £ 210). This punishment will be so severe for you that you will never have to come before

me again." However, a few months later, this same man was again brought up before the Amir, on which occasion he was not in a trifling mood. He said to him, "Come here, my friend, you are a baker?" "Yes, Sahib," he answered. "And your loaves are not the prescribed size?" "No, Sahib." "Then there must be too much room in your oven." And in a passionate fit of temper the Amir shouted, "Take him away and roast him in his own stove." This order was at once carried out.

"On returning home one night I heard that one of the Italians in the State service had shot an Afghan policeman. For a small offence; some said that he had struck a Post Office official on the ear, others that he had refused to pay money to a tonga driver because he considered the charge excessive—he was to be brought up before the Police of the Kotwali—the Chief of Police. Piperno, as the Italian was called, did not wish to be led through the streets like an ordinary prisoner and refused to go. When the police tried to take him there forcibly he tore himself away and locked himself in his room, whereupon they tried to storm the house. In his excitement Piperno fired through the wooden door, which the police were trying to break down with their bayonets, and shot one of them mortally. The police finally broke through the door and dragged him off to the police station. He was then put in a dark cell in solitary confinement, and after lengthy proceedings was condemned to death. An appeal was made to higher authorities, but they confirmed the sentence.

"One morning a servant came to us and

asked permission to go and see the Italian stoned to death; the execution of the sentence was, however, postponed. There was only one way to avoid this, and that was by purchasing the murderer. The dreadful price was about 7,000 to 10,000 rupees (£ 450 to £ 650) and there was, further, a sum of 15,000 rupees (£ 1,000) to be paid to the relatives of the deceased, in order to save the blood of the Italian. Sometimes when we were returning home late at night after a walk, we could see a dull flickering light coming from the small dark rooms of the prison. At the entrance stood an Afghan policeman dressed in a dark red uniform, with black facings, and black lambskin woollen cap. Excepting the members of the Legation and the Italian doctors no one was allowed to visit the Italian; and the night time a guard used to sleep in the same room with him. I often pictured to myself what a dreadful time the prisoner must have endured—hours, days and weeks of uncertainty, for when I left Kabul in the autumn he was still in prison. We all hoped at that time that he would soon be set free, but his troubles were not over so soon.

"After I left Afghanistan I heard nothing more of him until in June I saw in the papers that Piperno had been killed. Later I ascertained the following facts. When eventually a figure had been fixed for the redemption money, the Italian was led to the place of execution where he was made to kneel down and was handed over by the judge to the friend of the dead man. He drew his long knife and threw it on to the ground, saying, 'An Afghan will

not soil his hand with the blood of an heathen.' According to Afghan law, Piperno ought to have been imprisoned for another ten years. One can quite understand that he eventually tried to escape and succeeded by bribing his gaolers ; he is said to have reached the frontier, but there he collapsed. Not knowing the language, full of troubles and worries, low in spirit, he gave himself up of his own accord to the Afghan authorities, who again brought him back to prison in Kabul. There he stayed for a few days, after which they took him out quietly and executed him. The Europeans and the Italian Legation only learnt about the execution when it was all over." [1]

It is said that when once somebody suggested to Abdur Rahman whether his was not the iron rule, he is said to have replied "Yes, it is so, but I have also to deal with iron people." In other words he had to subdue a wild tribe who knew no obeisance either to man or king. In his own memoir he writes : "On many occasions I get quite discouraged on account of the misbehaviour of my people, who keep on rebelling, quarrelling and intriguing against each other and making false reports of each other to me. I get very weary and sometimes think that their position is unchangeable and their intrigues incurable, and that it is impossible to raise them to that standard which would make them equal to their neighbours in strength and character. I feel that it would be well for me to retire from this life of everlasting anxiety and struggle and take a quiet, peaceful life somewhere else, leaving

1 *Through the Heart of Afghanistan* by Emil Trinkler, p. 201. London, 1928.

Amir Abdur Rahman Grand father of Amanullah Khan and the most Powerful King to rule over whole of Afghanistan

Amir Habibullah Khan father of Amanullah, who was mysteriously shot dead while on a Shikar expedition at Jalalabad

my people to fight amongst themselves until they are ruined." [1]

He was indeed a born soldier and a hard worker. He says of himself in his memoir: "I am always ready as a soldier on the march to a battle in such a manner that I can start without any delay in case of emergency. The pockets of my coat and trousers are always filled with loaded revolvers and one or two loaves of bread for one day's food; this bread is changed every day. Several guns and swords are always lying by the side of my bed or the chair on which I am seated within the reach of my hand and saddled horses are always kept ready in front of my office not only for myself but for all my courtiers and my personal attendants at the door of my Darbar room. I have also ordered that a considerable number of gold coins should be sewn into the saddles of my horses when required for a journey and on both sides of the saddles are two revolvers. I think it is necessary in such a warlike country that the sovereign, and especially, a sovereign who is a soldier on the field of battle, though my country is perhaps more peaceful and safe now than many other countries, still one can never be too cautious and too well prepared." [2]

For a further detailed and most interesting account of his life I would refer my readers to his own autobiography translated into English and edited by Mir Munshi Mohd. Khan, Published in 1900 in London by John Murray, Albermarle Street. He was succeeded by his son Habibullah Khan, brave son of

1 *The Life of Abdur Rahman Amir of Afghanistan*: Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan, vol. II, p 43.

2 *Ibid*, vol. II, p. 90.

a brave father, who had unfortunately but a short life. Plots and counter-plots were being made against him and on the 20th February 1919 while on a hunting expedition, he was shot dead under suspicious circumstances, at Jallalabad.

Some put this on to his brother and some to his own youngest son, Amanullah Khan, but nothing for certain is known to the outside world except a few of the Afghans, who were actually in these wild plots against their own king. Be it as it may, young Amanullah did prove himself to be a favourite of the arch-plotters and he succeeded to the throne of Afghanistan having imprisoned his elder brother, the rightful heir to the throne, Anayatullah Khan, who subsequently became three-days king as will be seen in the last chapter.

Amanullah Khan, immediately after his accession to the throne under mysterious circumstances, wanted to be entirely independent unlike his grand father and his father and, with this aim in view, he declared war against the British in March 1919. The great war had hardly ended and England having lost much of its precious blood and money was reluctant to enter into a fresh skirmish of however small a nature ; she therefore acceded to his terms and allowed him to remain an independent ruler of Afghanistan. To commemorate this great event, the king held a great feast at Paghman which is his summer seat, some eighteen miles away from Kabul, and there, for eight days people of the whole of Afghanistan gathered together and enjoyed to their hearts' content. This feast was known in Afghanistan as Jashn-e-hingham-e-Istakhalali of which more in succeeding chapters.

CHAPTER IV

KARACHI TO KABUL

In commemoration of the great event of the Jashn-e-Hingham-e-Istakhalali (meaning the ceremony of the Observance of the Day of Independence) described in the preceding chapter, Amanullah Khan held since 1919 at Paghman, his Summer seat a great feast. The time fixed was August (in my case it was the 16th of August) when the climate of Afghanistan is at its best and when flowers and fruits are in abundance. Partly with a view to exploring a new field for my business and partly with a view to realise personally the beauties of this fascinating country, I applied for my passport at Karachi. At first I had decided to motor out the whole of my trip round Afghanistan from Karachi via Lasbella and Quetta to Chaman and thence to Kandahar, Ghazni, Kabul and back to India via the Khyber Pass and Peshawar. This plan however I had to give up, as for more than a fortnight I could not get any reply definitely about my passport, as in the usual routine the Commissioner in Sind has to apply to the Governor of Bombay and he in his turn applies to the Viceroy and then the reply filters through the same channel *vice versa*. However, after patient waiting for a fortnight I suddenly got a phone message from the Commissioner's office that my passport was ready. This was on the afternoon of the 10th of August 1928 and I had to reach Kabul by the morning of the 16th of that month to see the opening ceremony of the Day of Observance of

Independence of Afghanistan. Naturally therefore I had to change my plans and in great haste I got my few clothings and necessary articles together and started on the evening of the 11th August for Peshawar to go to Kabul straight from there instead of via Kandahar and Ghazni.

What was my surprise when I found a telegram awaiting me at Peshawar informing me that I must obtain sanction of the Afghan Consul at Simla before I could proceed to Kabul. This was most disappointing as it meant at least eight days more by which time the festivities at Kabul would have been over. But luckily on making enquiries at the Afghan Consulate at Peshawar, I was assured that there was no need for any such procedure as the Afghan Consul at Karachi had endorsed my passport. I therefore made preparations to leave Peshawar the very next morning and had to turn my Indian money into Afghan coins consisting of Kerans (about 4 annas or 4d.) and Afghanis (about 8 annas or 8d.) We had to take about a couple of canvas water bags, as there are no tanks or pipes on the way but travellers have to fill in their bags wherever they come across a stream of water.

So on the 14th of August 1928, I, at last, started from Peshawar by motor car with two friends, our car being fully loaded with our beddings, trunks, tiffin baskets, musical instruments, fruits, water-bags, etc. It might be mentioned that though we had our own car owned by my friend Mr. N. D. Mullick, there is a Motor Transport Company at Peshawar

Sardar Anayatullah Khan, the three days King of Afghanistan who was compelled to give way to Baccha-e-Saqa

A view of the famous Khyber pass. Note the beautiful motor road made by the British Government

with its head office in Kabul, which owns a monopoly for carrying passengers and cargo by motor cars and motor busses to and fro, and whose charges are fairly reasonable. Besides, the travellers, new to the country and its language, have distinct advantage in availing themselves of the services of the Motor Transport Co., especially when they are new to the country and its language.

After a fast run of nearly an hour we came to the fort of Jamrud where our passports were checked and we had to pay a toll on our motor of Rs. 4 (6 shillings,) and of Re. 1 per every man in our motor. We soon entered the historic Khyber Pass, the most ancient and the most difficult highway of Asia. "This pass has never ceased to figure in the history of both war and peace. Even prior to thirteen hundred years ago there is proof of the fact that the army of Alexander the Great crossed this way to India. The Buddhist monks followed in the wake of those warlike Grecian legions. Then came Nadir Shah, the Persian, crossing its rocky defiles and returning through it from the Golden Hindustan laden with all the jewels of India. Lastly Ahmedshah Durani returned to Afghanistan after sacking the fair fields of its neighbouring country."[1] The beautiful broad and smooth roads, one for motor cars and the other for caravans, as well as the Khyber railway passing through innumerable tunnels bored through the high and narrow mountains are indeed a tribute to the engineering skill of the British. Part of the Khyber railway is constructed

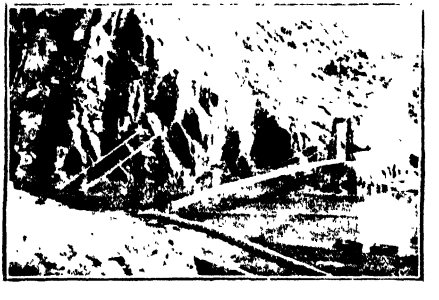
1 *Afghanistan of the Afghans*, p. 227.

in the territory of the Afridis who are prone to hostility on the slightest provocation and whose good-will is secured through a lavish distribution of money to the clansmen. Not much advantage seems to be taken of the railway now that it is so easy to go to the Khyber Pass by motor car within two hours, and it is mainly used for conveying goods and the transport of the relief units at the fort of Jamrud.

We soon passed Ali Musjid, which I visited a second time after nearly eighteen years and found it so changed with the new and smooth roads and the safety of the passage that I could hardly recognise it. In fact when I went to see the Khyber Pass as a school boy, eighteen years ago, there were no motors nor any railway but one had to go by common Tongas (two wheeled carriages) and the trip took a whole day. Besides, the road was not altogether safe and only two days in a week, (Tuesdays and Fridays) were kept open for visitors, as on those days caravans came from Kabul to Peshawar and at every post at a distance of about half a mile two or three armed sentries were kept for the safety of both the passengers and the caravans. It appeared so strange then to me to find one could go round the Khyber whenever one chose without the least fear of molestation of any sort or without the slightest preparation for ones safety. This naturally means that the British Power in Khyber since I last visited it has been most firmly established.

Passing the Khyber we rounded near fort of Shagar and soon came to Landi Kotal. Our passports

Some of the Zakakhel Tribesmen of the Afghan Hill Force, some of these men want to exchange their turbans for felt hats, their baggy trousers for plus fours and their rifles for swagger sticks



A beautiful bridge near Jalalabad on River Kabul

were once again checked and we were given a pass word to be remembered when again challanged at Landikhana, the extreme border of the British Territory in India. There is a dainty little bungalow at Landikhana where we had to go finally for our passports in the British Territory and as we were tired after a long motor run we were shown into a small but clean little room with a table and some chairs as well as plates and glasses where we had our rather hasty, but nevertheless enjoyable lunch.

After the passports were vised and the one pole showing the line of demarkation between the British and Afghan Territory being raised, we entered the forbidden grounds. Ah! what a thrill of excitement and expectations? I began throwing my eyes round the mountains hoping every moment to confront some wild Afghan robbers with rifles and swords, but mile after mile we rapidly covered with no sign of a human soul or of any peril. After about an hour's run we stopped at Dakka, a little village nestling on a river side where we had to present our passports and show our luggage for duty purposes. There were small mud plastered huts with hardly any furniture, where various Afghans were seated engaged in their respective duties which they were doing most leisurely. In a room there were about half a dozen of them and on entering we found the whole room including what little furniture there was, covered with the seeds of water mellons. It took a pretty long time before the room was cleared and we were asked to sit. I might mention in passing that the moment every motor

leaves *Torkam*, the first Afghan outpost near Landikhana, a phone message is sent to Dakka to the customs' men giving the motor car number so that a check is kept on every motor and every buss that enters Afghan borders.

It would take long to describe various formalities which we had to pass through and the leisure with which the work was being done, but suffice it to say we were delayed for over an hour and a half for the work which in any European country would hardly have taken more than twenty minutes. It was sunset when we left Dakka for Jalalabad where we intended spending the night. We went at a rapid space through rough and dusty road for an hour or so with nothing but mountains around us as far as eyes can reach, till we came to a Serai at a place called Bhatikote or Sayad Mukhtad Badshah's Serai. Several motor lorries and bullock carts stood blocking the way. On enquiry we were told that as it was growing dark and there was fear of highwaymen on the way we could only proceed with the permission of the head of the village who was responsible to the King of Afghanistan for the safety of travellers passing through his village. We searched out this venerable Sayad, living not far from the Serai, and asked for his permission to push on to Jalalabad. He came out of his house in company with other men and gave us a courteous reply and willingly permitted us to proceed on to Jalalabad. He also offered us services of his two armed men for our safety on the way. Our chauffeur, a timid Hindu, was however so much frightened by the other chauffeurs of the

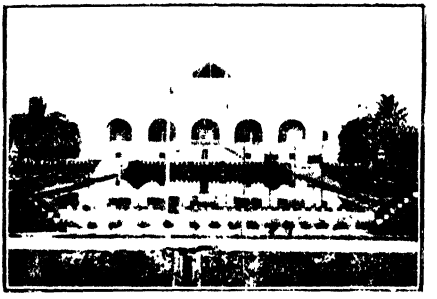
motor lorries that he had cunningly contrived to puncture the tyres of our car, so that when he was told to proceed, he quietly said that he had punctures on the tyres which would take him nearly two hours to repair by which time it would be so dark that he could hardly be able to find his way. This was disappointing indeed, and we had no other alternative but to pass the night in the Serai, along with the bullock carts, donkeys, mules and shepherds of the neighbouring villages. There was no accommodation to speak of and it was so dark that we could hardly see anything around us. The whole atmosphere looked threatening and suspicious. However, when we wanted to go up the top of the low roof to sleep the night over, we found there was no ladder to go by; here our school days' tricks came very handy and somehow we jumped one over the shoulders of the other like monkeys and got on to the top of the roof. We spread our beds on Charpais (stringed cots). No food was available except *Naans* or bread and roast meat which however we avoided not being to our taste and contented ourselves with what little we had in our tiffin basket and stretched our weary limbs to sleep. It was a beautiful starry night, and, tired as we were with a whole day's motoring on rough and dusty roads, sleep came to me so rapidly and lasted so long that it was with a fright that I woke up at four o'clock in the morning on hearing a fearful din and confused babbling. The whole of the caravan was moving and in less than half an hour there was not a soul in the huge place. The life and hustle and bustle of the previous night had completely ceased.

We hastily put on our overcoats and dashing cold water over our sleepy faces to keep ourselves awake, jumped down from the top of the roof and by about half past five in the morning we were on our way to Jalalabad.

At about eight o'clock in the morning of the 15th we reached Jalalabad after crossing a few rough bogs and through the kindness of the British Consul, a Mohammedan by name Khan Sahib Jehangir Khan (now Khan Bahadur) we had some tea and biscuits and fresh water to wash ourselves with. We had a pleasant little chat with the rather bulky friend of ours who looked a picture of health probably due to less worry and more leisure, and after having taken a photograph of his bungalow and of himself we again dashed along the road to Kabul.

About twenty miles away from Jalalabad there comes a nice little place called Nimla, surrounded by lovely avenue of green trees. It has a very nice Dak Bungalow where fairly good accommodation could be had ; also food and drink, and for those who have no other acquaintance in Jalalabad that is the only halting place after leaving Dakka, either at night or day time.

The Afghan wayfairers wear a tremendous lot of nails in their heavy boots and these give way to the rough stones on the road with the result that motor tyres are punctured so often that in spite of our best efforts we had a feeling that Kabul would not be reached the same day. We passed Fateh Abad Bazaar



Royal palace at Jalalabad which was totally burnt down by Shinwari tribesmen during the first Afghan turmoil prior to Amanullah's abdication

Bird's eye view of Kabul, some seven miles before entering the city proper

and Serai, also Surkh Pool, where we had to pay a toll of two Kerans for our car. At Kulali, a small village we waited for our lunch. The wayside inn was a wretched little place where we got some boiled eggs and *Naan* and made the best we could of our meagre and unpalatable lunch. While lunching, I saw a man of the inn emptying a ken of oil which naturally greased his hands. He promptly rubbed these into another fellow's head and cleaned them dry so that while he found a supposed towel for his greasy hands the other found oil for his hair. Laughingly we left the inn and darted for Kabul, but night overtook us as we anticipated and we had to stay at the Royal Dak Bungalow or Guest House at a place called Barri Kao. The keeper of the Dak Bungalow was out at Paghman for the holiday and fortunately the outside verandah of the house was open for us to stay the night over. A man was sent to the nearest village to bring a fowl and some eggs and my cook gave us some sort of a fowl for dinner after two hours' hard work on the fire made in crude way in open air. All throughout, the food on the way was very unsatisfactory, as these villages are seldom proper places to look for them, but we being new to Kabul road and our tyres unused to the rough stones, and the Afghan villagers' nails being merciless, we were naturally kept hanging for two days on the road and had to make the best of it. All night we heard terrible howling of wolves, and on the early morning of the 16th August we again started for our destination and at about ten o'clock came to a place called Boot-e-Khak. We had to halt there for Octroi

again and to appease our hunger we bought some lovely melons and made a nice meal of them. These mellons are called *gharmaa*, in Afghan language and are really very delicious. They are not obtainable in India but another species called *sardaa* obtainable in India (of course not so good as the *gharmaas*) cost nearly a rupee, whereas these, we had for three annas at Boot-e-Khak.

A man was sent along with us from the customs to take us to a place for taxing our luggage and he quietly sat on the mud-guard of our car till he brought us safely to the Custom House of the longed for city of Kabul.

CHAPTER V

THE TWO CAPITALS—ANCIENT AND MODERN

It was a quaint looking place reached through rather narrow streets and the motor car was driven through a big gate right into a huge compound where it took a turn and returned alongside the gate. Several Afghan officers of the Customs came out and ordered the whole of our luggage to be untied and brought before them. One after another they began searching our beddings, trunks, portmanteaus, etc., lest we smuggled cigarettes, liquors, and similar other dutiable articles. My portable typewriter was valued at what I do not know, but I was asked to pay Rs. 200 for it (about £1 5). It was in vain I argued with the Customs appraiser who was ill-informed as to the prices of the articles manufactured in foreign countries but eventually I had to leave my typewriter at the Custom House on the understanding that when I returned back to India, I would take it with me. This saved me from fabulous duty. My friend had a ***Dilruba*** (a stringed Indian instrument) on which they wanted to assess fourteen Afghanis or Rs. 7/8 as duty. Rather than risking the instrument by allowing it to remain in the Custom House, my friend paid the duty, though in the end when the matter was brought to the notice of some other influential Afghan friends, they managed to get us a refund. My other friend had an instrument for physical culture which evidently the Afghans had never heard of nor seen and they wanted the package to be opened. To their surprise my friend brought

out a portable gramophone on which we put one of the records for exercises and began taking steps to the music which greatly amused the Customs appraisers and eventually they let us off without duty on those, as, if they found ample compensation in the fun they had out of the music and our dancing. The duty ranged from 20% to 200%. For instance, on petrol, cigarettes and biscuits, etc., 200% was charged. On oilman stores 21% was charged out of which 1% was credited to the Education Fund Account. Naturally owing to these excessive duties things were rather expensive at Kabul and when we brought this to the notice of some of the leading Afghans, who were in the ministry we were told that the King was trying to modify the schedules of Customs Duty so as to encourage trade in his country.

In passing, I might say that the goods imported from India and other countries into Afghanistan by various legations such as, German, French, Italian, Turkish, Persian, Russian, British and so forth, were all exempted from duty. The following from Emil Trinkler's "Through the Heart of Afghanistan" may be of interest to the readers of this book :—

"It was very often unpleasant working at the Custom House. Even when the authorities tried to make matters as easy as possible for us, it was impossible to prevent other buyers and sellers from piling up their goods near ours. It became especially unpleasant when about 50 to 100 leather sacks filled with mutton fat were placed there. In the great heat—the thermometer often rising to about 40 and

50 degrees at midday in the shade—the fat naturally turned rancid and oozed between the seams of the sacks, running down the sides which shone as though they had been polished and gave forth a most nauseating smell.

"It was interesting watching beer and spirits being passed through the Customs. This was naturally also something quite new for the Afghans, as alcohol is forbidden for Mohammedans. Each one of us received a card on which was written how much beer, whiskey, etc., we were allowed to consume. If a consignment arrived, the number of bottles that the individual required would be written off his allotment. We were also compelled to make a note of the person to whom the spirits had been sold, it being understood of course that we would not sell beer to Afghans. The purpose of every article on which we had to pay duty, which the Afghans had not seen before had to be carefully explained. Nothing could pass the Customs free, except dirty clothes. Books, even pictures of relatives were liable to be taxed, and the Customs duties are certainly one of the chief sources of revenue in the country." [1]

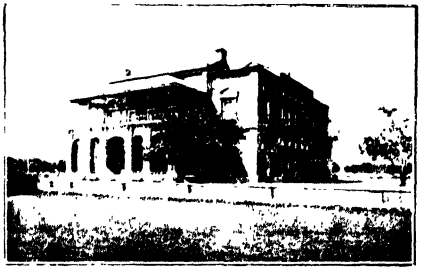
It was with great relief indeed that we left the quaint old Custom House and went in search of a hotel. There were no more than three hotels in the whole of Kabul and the one being occupied by Russians and the second being no good for our purpose, we had to content ourselves with

1 *Through the Heart of Afghanistan*, p. 182.

the third; namely, Hotel Vali.[1] The building of this hotel was quite modern, with arrangements more or less on European style. With difficulty we got two rooms between us three, as the hotel was pretty full with visitors from various parts of the world. We were charged Rs. 8 a day and our food comprised of morning tea, lunch and dinner. The invigorating cool climate of Kabul required more than a mere cup of tea in the morning with a half-boiled egg and some pieces of *Naan*, but fortunately a few steps away from our hotel there was a restaurant opened by an Indian, where we used to enjoy our second cup of tea with pastries, both of which were very delicious. As stated previously the Afghans drink green tea without milk which we did not find to our taste.

The city of Kabul is rather a quaint one. There are a few modern buildings built on Russian and German style but otherwise the bulk of the city consists of old styled mud plastered houses. The streets were rather dusty though not very dirty and the fashionable quarter was known as Lab-e-Darya. This meant the river side as there was a small rivulet running across in which people bathed and washed their clothes as well as cleaned their animals. Consequently, this fashionable quarter, instead of sending forth cool and delightful air gave out rather obnoxious stench at times and every time we passed

1 As I am writing this book, my Afghan host at Ghazni now in Karachi, informs me that the building is blown to pieces by the firing that took place between the soldiers of Amanullah and Baccha-e-saqa.



One of the four Royal Palaces at Kabul

Beautiful rows of Chinar trees extending over two miles before entering Paghman, the summer seat of the Afghan King

through this quarter we felt as if we were passing through a suage farm. There were a few taxis running but generally tongas or two wheeled carriages pulled by one horse were used. The gariwallas wore European dress with either straw or felt hats and being rather dark in skin they looked almost like Italians. There was but one Cinema in Kabul, a nice big building, but when we saw it, it was in complete ruins having been burnt by a big fire.

There are two or three palaces of the old King, Abdur Rahman and his son, Habibullah Khan, which are worth a visit.

The museum in the huge compound of one of the palaces of the King particularly interested me, as it had a very good collection of ancient curiosities. For instance, there were some fine statues of Greek and Buddhistic period together with innumerable coins of the reigns of the Persian and Roman Kings, all of which clearly showed that Afghanistan had been conquered by Romans, Greeks, Persians, Buddhists, Mongols and so forth. In one place there were wooden men dressed up, which were the relics of ancient times when a tribe of people called Noories were worshipping these idols.

The first clock made in Afghanistan also found a prominent place in this museum, as well as the Koran written in Kufic character which was put in a special room beautifully covered up with glasses and nobody was allowed to enter it, as the Koran is considered most sacred and this particular one was

supposed to have been written by the hands of Usman one of the apostles of Prophet Mohammed.

Some beautiful pistols and axes, with brilliant diamonds and rubies stuck on them, were kept which belonged to the time of the Persians when they were the rulers of Afghanistan.

The fountain pen with which the treaty with the British was signed in 1919 by Amanullah declaring himself independent was also given the place of prominence in the museum.

There was an armoured coat, the whole of which was engraved with the sacred writings of Koran and looked most unique. Probably the warrior was a king, who was supposed to be immune from death or injury—if he put on a male coat of armour with the sacred inscriptions from Koran.

Amongst numerous other interesting and fascinating collections in the museum were to be seen pictures of the Sindhis of far off days in whose contact the Persians, when in Afghanistan, had come, depicting peculiar types of Sindhi top hats. Of course special permit had to be taken before entering into the museum but we had no great difficulty in obtaining the same.

My work in Kabul used to carry me through the bazaar daily. It was a peculiar Eastern bazaar, with narrow dusty lanes, containing small shops on either side, with scarcely any light and fresh air. There were shopkeepers, provision merchants, fruit dealers, Naan

and pillau shops, ironmongers, carpenters, bootmakers, tailors, silversmiths, scent dealers, meat shops, grain shops, sugar and tea merchants, money-lenders and in short the whole of the trade of Afghanistan was carried on in this bazaar. The chief import trade of Afghanistan was of tea, sugar, matches and candles, piecegoods, hardware, machinery, etc. The export trade consisted of carpets made at Herat and other places, hides and skins, as well as beautiful furs and fruits. Fruit was really a fine trade for Afghanistan and but for it the poorer classes would starve as they had very little income and they were so content that they practically subsisted on a big *Naan* or bread worth a pie, and a water-melon, known as *garmaa* in Afghanistan, worth about two annas. These fruits were carried on donkeys, camels and motor cars from Kabul to Peshawar and from Kandahar to Chaman whence they found their way to various towns in India. Like in India, one has to bargain for things for a considerable time in Afghanistan markets. It was generally safe to start with half the price asked for, and though one was refused once or twice by the shopkeepers, they eventually bargained for two-thirds of the price.

The Afghans are a very hospitable nation and several of our friends entertained us to dinners and tea parties. Perhaps it will be interesting to describe one of these dinner parties. A high official once invited us to dinner at his residence in Kabul, situated near the river side, described before as Lab-e-Darya. We were received in an open compound by the host and his friends, where we sat chatting and joking and very

soon afterwards fruits were placed before us consisting of beautiful grapes and water-melons of various types, peaches, apples, etc. Liquor in Afghanistan is totally prohibited, except in the case of the various Legations who have to apply for their requirements to His Majesty's Government, this being the only quantity allowed free of duty in the country, so that ordinarily it is very difficult, if not entirely impossible, to obtain liquor in Kabul. Our friends who were all cultured Afghans, having travelled round several countries of Europe, were naturally Europeanized and were not much averse to imbibe a few drops of strong spirit, which they somehow had managed to procure in our honour. After about an hour's pleasant chatting and fruit eating, we were escorted to the dining room inside the house, the table of which was neatly decorated in modern European style with innumerable little dishes consisting of meat, chillau, pillau,[1] pickles, sweets, dry fruits, celleries and so forth. Everything being readily arranged, the doors were closed and the servants retired leaving the hosts and their guests to themselves undisturbed and unobserved. Before each person two plates, one on top of the other, were placed, so that after having tasted a few dishes on the first plate, it was discarded and the second one was used for remaining food, which was so much in abundance that we could hardly do justice to it. After dinner, as if we had not had enough, we were again brought out in the open compound and treated to some more fruits, tea and coffee. We could see that

1 Chillau and pillau are dishes of rice cooked with clarified butter and in them are mixed pieces of meat, almond, raisins, spices, etc.

the Afghans were excellent eaters and we were highly charmed with their hospitality, which we shall always remember.

The Telegraphs and the Post Offices were also run by the Afghans, and though the King had engaged services of expert Persians and other foreigners, these departments seemed to me still to be in their infancy and we had rather an anxious time when we used to receive telegrams from our people in India to say that our letters had not reached them, while as a matter of fact we used to post our letters twice a week on Indian mail days. The telegrams received too were often mutilated and when we applied to the Telegraph Office, they promised to get the corrections, but it generally took several days before the original message was in any way intelligible. The fact was both the Postal and Telegraph Departments had not come up to the required standards, and though we made enquiries all round, we were never able to ascertain why our letters never reached India for twenty days at a stretch when they ought to have been there within six days as was usually the case. Various reasons were advanced among which some Afghans hinted that our letters were being censored either at Kabul or at Dakka. Some even thought the British were censoring all letters coming from Afghanistan, at Lahore, before delivering them to the addressees in India. Anyhow this has remained a mystery unsolved as yet. Most probably the delay was due to want of proper postal organization.

There were some nice schools and colleges in Kabul established by the King, who was extremely keen on the education of boys and girls. Languages taught there, were Persian, French, German and Russian. English was very seldom taught and the teachers and professors were also Persians, Germans and French. The primary education was free and for higher education boys and girls were even paid a small sum and were clothed and fed by way of encouragement, as His Majesty the King believed that in the higher education of boys and girls alone was to be found the salvation of Afghanistan. So many were yearly sent out to the Continent, Turkey, and Persia for education, that I was told it cost the Afghan Government seventy lacs of rupees annually (£ 50,000) for educating, boarding, lodging and clothing the young Afghan students.

It was indeed a pretty sight to see young Afghan girls, some in veil and some without, with neat, white hand-gloves and with European dress and a tin hand-bag containing their books and other paraphernalia, walking at a brisk pace towards their schools, early every morning.

During our saunterings round the town, the mosques at Kabul and Paghman greatly attracted our attention in as much as instead of there being minarets of a peculiarly Eastern style, they seemed to be representing more of the Russian and German style of architecture. They were absolutely modern structures very different from the ordinary mosques one sees in India and what was more, the

Amanullah placing wreaths at the Tomb of the Arch on the Day of Independence

A mosque at Paghman looking quite like a modern German architecture

King had changed the Sabbath, which is invariably Friday, in the whole of the Mohammedan world since the time of Mohammed, to Thursday. Considering the religious sentiments of the mountain Afghans, this was no ordinary achievement on the part of the Afghan King. And why this change in the religious belief of the people since centuries? Only with a view to break the power of the illiterate and self-styled Mullahs who did more harm than good to His Majesty's subjects; and it was the firm belief of the King that the sooner his subjects came out of the grip of the all-powerful but ignorant, bigoted and wicked Mullahs, the quicker would they educate and better themselves[1].

The Afghan soldiers did not strike us as particularly smart. This was possibly due to their dress. I noticed all the soldiers having a cheap class of grey-coloured clothes, looking like Indian khadi, with a peculiar kind of Boer hats made of the same material. They were not given any socks, but wore putties on the heavy military boots which were never polished so that the colour very soon turned grey and matched the colour of their uniforms. The officers were certainly smart in their dress which was European, and were very neat in their appearance too, so that they stood in striking contrast to the ordinary soldiers. Their military training was partly Turkish and partly German. But whatever dress they wore, or training they underwent, the Afghans looked certainly a warlike nation

1 This was the version given to us by some Afghans in Kabul. But my other Afghan friends inform me that this is a wrong notion. The King's idea was to keep Friday as a Sabbath day, but he made Thursday a holiday for the people, so that they may begin to understand the sanctity of Friday and keep that latter day for prayers and religious observances only.

being imbued with free spirit of their mountain fastness.

Dar-Ul-Aman the new capital city of Afghanistan, to replace the old historic Kabul, was under construction, six miles away from the present capital city, when we saw it. There was a beautiful broad road, about fifty feet wide, running in a straight line for nearly six miles, with fine rows of Chinar trees on either side, and with small drain-like streamlets from which the road was watered every day in the most ingenious Eastern fashion by two persons standing on opposite sides and splashing water on the road with a tin can attached to a long rod and appearing like a sauce pan. On either side of this beautiful broad road were artistic villas of the aristocratic Afghans built in German, Italian and Russian styles, with up-to-date fittings giving to the on-looker very much the appearance of New Delhi. At the extreme end of the road stood a nice little hill in the centre of which was under construction, Amanullah Khan's beautiful palace made of marble, cement and bricks combined, on a very artistic German style. There was a beautiful big garden, with lawns and tennis-courts at the back of the palace and the surroundings gave one an impression of Scotland; the only difference being that whereas Scotland is beautifully green and purple with heather, Dar-Ul-Aman looked bleak with scraggy and barren mountains. In this new capital city, there was a magnificient three-storied building which was to be the Secretariat and Parliamentary House for the newly constituted Jirga. There was a beautiful public garden with lovely flowers and lawns where in the evenings young

Sanatorium midway between Kabul and Paghman where people suffering from Consumption are treated by a Turkish Doctor

The beautiful scenery depicting Kabul River on the way to Bamian

Afghan ladies with their family members strolled round and had tea and light refreshments.

A little railway ran on one side of this broad six-mile long road and carried passengers to and fro, two or three times a day. I was extremely pleased to find a Parsee, a resident of Kabul for the past 35 years, in Dar-Ul-Aman who, though he had left Karachi years ago, was speaking his own mother tongue without difficulty and remembered things of the whole of Karachi as accurately as if he had left the city only a few months ago.

Before reaching Dar-Ul-Aman proper, a small road turned off on the right to the tomb of the famous Moghul Emperor, Baber. The tomb was unpretentious and it appeared much care was needed to prevent its falling to pieces. Below the hills where Baber sleeps the eternal sleep, lies the German Legation.

Between Paghman and Kabul, on a high hill, surrounded by beautiful trees, was a sanatorium for the consumptives. This used to be one of the palatial buildings of the late Amir Habibullah Khan. It had then been turned into a neat and clean little sanatorium, run under a Turkish doctor. The cleanliness inside the building and the various amenities of life provided for these unfortunate victims of consumption, were worthy of high ideals the fallen monarch had set before himself, for the uplift of his country. In Kabul there was also a nice hospital run by Turkish and German doctors, where any one desiring medical treatment was attended to.

CHAPTER VI

PAGHMAN—THE BEAUTIFUL SUMMER SEAT OF AFGHAN ROYALTY

Seven thousand feet above the sea level, some sixteen miles away from the ancient city of Kabul, is situated the beautiful Summer seat of the Afghan Royalty, known as Paghman. It is surrounded by hills on all sides and for two miles before one climbs up the hill, there is a lovely avenue of small Chinar trees. There are bungalows of the aristocrats built in Russian and German style, with gardens in front of them, presenting a most charming sight that any modern first class hill station in India would give us, and yet they all were so different in their designs and structures.

The climate turned cooler and cooler as the motor dashed higher and higher up the hill, and when we entered the Triumphal Arch, most exquisitely decorated for the occasion of the Afghan Independence Day, for the time being I thought I was transported to a Continental city. There were beautiful young girls with modern European dresses with up-to-date shoes, stockings and gloves, and thin coloured veils a little below their eyes, to add to their charms. They looked at us with beautiful big eyes and tender smiles to signify how happy they were to enjoy this newly obtained freedom of going without the Burkha or veils. And yet there were many women with faces completely covered with small

Fountains daily play at Paghman during summer in the evenings and lend an artistic effect to the gardens

Triumphal Arch at Paghman, erected in honour of those Afghan soldiers who laid their lives for the independence of Afghanistan

pieces of black veils, though dressed in up-to-date European style. There were strapping young lads, rosy-cheeked and fair-skinned, with grey eyes that sparkled with delight of the holidays they were about to enjoy, all in European dresses made of course by Kabul tailors, with Kabul made cloth of a rather course type. They all wore felt hats made in Kabul and with gloves in their hands and sticks to add to their smartness, they looked indeed like Europeans. The king had forbidden any one entering the main centres of attractions at Paghman with turbans, and even the sweepers were not exempted from this Royal Farmaan or command. As a result of this we met with but few in real Afghan dress, at least in Paghman.

Then there were the emblems of the newly constituted Parliament, called Loi Jirga, with black frock coats and trousers, black felt hats and nailed boots, looking like Russian priests. Hand in hand they walked, three or four in a row, like school going children looking amazingly at the electric lights and the decorations all round them on arches, trees, buildings, gardens and so forth. It might be added here that most of these Afghans were farmers and villagers staying miles away from the capital city, who had visited beautiful Paghman for the first time, with special European dress forced upon them. Their looks and gait as well as their manners clearly showed they were not an enlightened class, so that all the pomp and decorum they saw round them, was sufficient to mystify them. At any rate, they did command front seats wherever they went, and all

their expenses from the buss upto Cinema performances were defrayed from the Royal Treasury. No doubt then, that they felt a bit elated and thought themselves above their other Afghan brethren.

We went straight to Hotel Bahar, a magnificent Hotel constructed on German style, where our friends had engaged a room for us beforehand. There were so many guests from different countries that it was sheer good luck that we got one room even between us three. Beyond three couches and some carpets there was hardly any furniture in our room. We were charged 12 Afghanis a day, that is, Rs. 6 per day consisting of morning tea, lunch and dinner. There was no breakfast but a couple of half-boiled eggs, and dried pieces of Naan with green tea, were all we used to get every morning. The lunch and dinner had hardly much variety and they consisted of soup, meat, chillau or pillau and fruits.

The food was always served in European style and the tables too were laid with forks, knives, spoons, etc., as we find in any modern European hotel. The waiters were dressed in white drill suits in European style and they were always very polite and smiling, though it appeared to me, they wanted a more frequent change of clothes than they were actually given, as being white they got dirty in no time.

I was told that the Government ran the hotel and paid something like ten thousand rupees

The imposing Hotel Bahar at Paghman. The "X" marks the room occupied by the author

Amanullah Khan addressing his people on the first day when performing the opening ceremony of the Day of Independence

annually as loss. The manager was supposed to have been sent to Bombay for a couple of years, by the Afghan Government, to learn at the Taj Mahal Hotel how to run the management, and considering the fact that he had to train an entirely ignorant set of Afghan lads who had never seen knives or forks for dinner, nor had they seen any Hotel on European style, the manager must have had the time of his life to have brought them upto the standard I found them, which though not A1 was tolerably good. The internal management of the service and the bath, etc., wanted considerable improvement to be called entirely satisfactory, but yet, taken on the whole, and keeping the fact in mind that the whole show was got up only a couple of years ago, I thought there was no justification for grousing.

As thousands of people had gathered together at Paghman for the holidays, and holidays indeed they were, for even the post office was topsy-turvey for eight days, the Government had pitched small tents by hundreds which were rented to the public on a nominal charge of about a rupee per day. Every tent was filled up by men, women and children, and from early morning till late at night they were busy with the daily programme of amusements. There were cinemas, feats of strength, tennis and cricket matches, firing competitions, fire-works, art and industrial exhibitions, musical performances, circus, carnivals, and innumerable other entertainments, to keep one busy all throughout eight days of the observance of Independence.

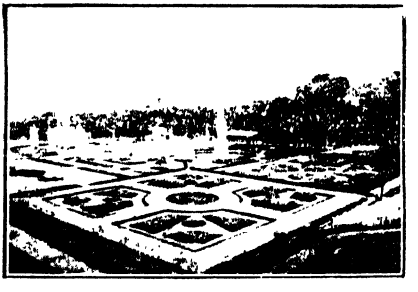
For every motor that ran up to Paghman and back to Kabul during these holidays, there was a tax of Rs. 2-8-0 each way, which income went towards meeting a part of the huge expense.

Every evening a full band was playing in the Public Garden when fountains were at play, and small music parties were to be seen in groups at little distances, with hand harmoniums and Indian tablas.[1] There were Italians, Germans, Russians, French and English men and women, not to mention other nations, such as the Turks, Indians, Persians, and various hill tribesmen. All this great mass of mixed humanity, collected there under beautiful surroundings, attractively decorated with flags, festoons, buntings and electric lights, made the evenings most pleasant. The exquisite fountains at play, the band sending forth Indian tunes, as the Afghans have no music of their own, the beautiful flower beds and lawns, the singing of various musicians in different parts of the extensive garden, the leisurely saunterings of the young and old in their gala dresses, helped to transform Paghman into a Fairyland; and I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw Afghanistan so beautifully arrayed after the sights I had seen all the way from Peshawar to Kabul.

One evening there was a special large gathering, as there was going to be Atten dance, or the dance peculiar to the Afghan soldiers. There was a large number of Afghan soldiers standing in a circle

1 Two drum-like instruments on which timing is given to the music.

Note the orthodox Afghans in their national dress, as well as the refined Afghans in European dress watching a physical culture performance at Paghman



This beautiful public garden at Paghman looks very charming during the observance of Independence Day when crowds of people of all shades and grades gather there together

in their uniform, and with the tune of the music they started going round, and round, beating their steps to the time of music and clapping at intervals with the twist of the head which looked very attractive, though in the long run it became a bit monotonous. The dance being over, people began moving round the huge garden, looking very charming with the fountains of different designs shooting up an enormous quantity of water, and we sat in a cafe nearby for refreshments, from where we overlooked the whole garden. A few minutes later lo, the Aala Hazrat (His Majesty is thus termed in Afghanistan) alights from his beautiful Rolls Royce and saunters leisurely through the park. Immediately the aristocracy gathers round him, and the Aala Hazrat smiles and shakes hands with whomsoever he happens to be near by. He gently talks with them and behaves as if he is one of them. But who comes from yonder in English dress, a rather beautiful and dainty looking lady with white kid gloves in her hands and beautiful white fur round her delicate neck? While other ladies, European and Afghan, make a low bow to the King, this beautiful creature steals a quiet march from behind the spot where His Majesty is busy receiving salutations and courtesies, and walks with a smile most fascinating and a gait that showed she was no ordinary person. Here she is, face to face with His Majesty, there is an exchange of sweet smiles and the beautiful little arm is gripped affectionately by the King. It is Queen Souriya, the beautiful Syrian Queen for whom Amanullah Khan has sacrificed even his own country and Kingdom. Close by are to

be seen three Afghan children dressed in European style with a French and a German maid whom Queen Souriya greets affectionately, for they are her own. And so the King with his Queen and children, moves round the great gathering in a very simple and unassuming way, willingly extending his arm for a handshake to whosoever longs to clasp it. And then even a greater surprise. Both their Majesties come up to the cafe unattended by any of their staff, and walk up to the nearest table, unmindful as to who occupies it or who are nearest to it, and sitting there, order out their own coffee. Here goes a merry laugh from the Queen and another from the King and yet another, till late in the evening, when they return to their Palace, having enjoyed their coffee and the company of their friends. The Private Secretary to the King, Zia Humayun, a Persian, who knows more than seven languages, and the Military Attache to the King, a grandier looking Afghan, are loitering round the Park but never with their Majesties, as apparently the King and the Queen never want to show their pomp and dignity. Thus every evening their Majesties came and mingled with their own people and added to the charm of Paghman.

One afternoon we were at lunch in our Hotel Bahar, when suddenly I saw His Majesty at the door of our dining-room. A little lad of about ten evidently well brought up, atonce got up and bowed to him as a mark of respect. The King wishing not to attract any attention of those present, signalled to him to sit down, but it was too late and by that time the whole

King Amanullah and Queen Suriyah in English Court Dress
Note the Royal Autographs The whole of the writing
on the left is Amanullah's signature The plain
and dainty little signature on the right is of
Queen Suriyah

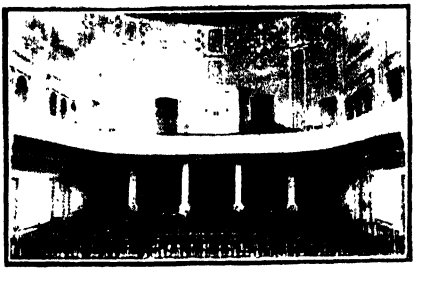
of the dining-room was aware of His Majesty's presence and every one stood up. His Majesty looked shy and stealthily made his way to the nearest table and sat down to lunch with some friends. Here was the success of the King whom his people adored for his simplicity and democratic disposition and where he acted himself as a King of the people.

Among these eight days of enjoyment and feasting one evening was specially allotted to gathering the whole population of Paghman to witness the ceremony of laying wreaths near the Triumphal Arch in honour of those brave Afghan soldiers who had fallen in the service of their country during the Third Afghan War. It was an impressive sight with the soldiers and the Afghan Officers all lined in rows and a large mass of people standing quietly. There were the orphans of those brave soldiers dressed in pure white, looking like innocent little lambs whom people welcomed by clapping and shouting. They were made to stand where the wreaths were placed and in fact wherever they went they were given preference and were looked upon with respect. His Majesty had undertaken to feed, educate and clothe them at the expense of the Government. After the ceremony was over, and this was very short indeed, no speeches being made of any kind, these orphans were given motor rides in specially decorated motor cars, which went round the centre of the show and thus added to the beauty of it all.

The King had spared no expense in making people's holidays as enjoyable as possible and an Indian woman singer was specially invited from Lahore for the occasion. She had more of looks than voice and though the fees kept were high she used to have full houses every night. But what pleased me most was the utter silence that prevailed in the audience, and both men and women alike heard the music with wrapt attention and utter silence, even though most of the Indian wordings were not understood by them. This reminded me of our Indian audience and I really began to marvel that those whom we ordinarily called wild were far superior in manners and behaviour to those who only prided themselves as being refined with the civilisation of centuries at their back.

A similar instance of the Afghan behaviour I had chance of observing on the occasion of Fire-Works that were arranged at Paghman during these holidays. The arrangement was made at the Race Course where thousands had collected to watch the wonderful Fire-Works which were certainly far superior to what I have so far seen in India. We were sitting at the topmost rung of the rows of stone steps and nearest to us was Anayatullah Khan or Agha Lala as he was called by the Afghans. (Agha Lala means elder brother and he is the eldest brother of the King). He was talking to us in a most friendly way when His Majesty asked him as to who we were. We were naturally introduced to both Their Majesties who began asking us who we were and how we liked their country and so forth. When the show

Cinema and Theatre at Paghman. The Building is used both for Cinema and Theatre performances. Also for holding Jirga meetings or the meetings of the Assembly



Inside view of the Theatre at Paghman

was over, naturally there was a great rush of people. There was a bevy of pretty Afghan girls who wanted to cut their way through. Immediately two soldiers came crying "room for ladies, room for ladies," and lo, the crowd stood aside to make room for them. This was beyond my expectation, I must confess, as I never had dreamt to find Afghans so polished and refined as to listen to a mere soldier and make room ungrudgingly for their women.

In the carnival things were arranged much on the same style as we see at carnivals in India and there was nothing very extraordinary except a Brobdingnagian, who was about nine feet in height. He was a man from Kandahar and was moving on his crutches. He was a veritable giant with the body well-proportioned and on enquiry I learnt that once he had a fall from a camel which broke his spinal cord, hence he was bent and had to move on crutches; even then he looked so huge and big with a rather large tongue in proportion to his mouth, which he used to roll peculiarly while talking, that he almost frightened children and ladies. He atonce reminded me of the *Pahlavans* or the warrior heroes of which Shah Namah, the great Persian epic, is full and I could quite understand that when in this age, Afghanistan, which was once a Persian territory, could produce a giant of nine feet, surely in those far off days the Persian warriors must have been of enormous size and strength. The real cause of merriment at the carnival was the presence of two Lilliputians hardly about three feet to three and a half walking on

either side of the giant. They were from Turkestan and had the looks of Mongolians.

The exhibition especially held at Paghman had a fine collection of all the articles manufactured in Afghanistan and it was really worth a visit. The produce of silk was exhibited in various phases and a man was explaining the details to the visitors, who were in larger number than the building could accommodate, but with all that the local industries such as, those of boots and shoes, leather, cloth, soft and warm hats, silk, various kinds of bangles, armlets, necklaces, all kinds of peculiar Afghan swords, rifles, walking sticks, soaps, attars or scents, carpets and numerous other local made articles were very well represented and was of immense interest to an outsider.

The King had made two tennis-courts in the garden at Paghman where his brother, Sardar Anayatullah Khan was taking keen interest in tennis and was almost daily playing there with his friends and we too were often invited to play with him. The King himself at times played tennis as also the Queen, but during the time I was there, though they were often on the tennis-court, I never had the pleasure of seeing them play. Most probably they were busy with other functions and could not spare time for tennis.

One thing which particularly attracted my attention while at Paghman, was the arrangement of beautiful fruits at the stalls all covered over with

Exterior view of the back of the Royal Palace at Paghman Note the beautiful stream of water running night and day

Hospital at Paghman where those Afghans who care to go, are treated free

white nets to prevent flies from disturbing the fruits. This gave a very neat appearance to the stalls and I am wondering why the various Municipalities in India cannot enforce this practice in the bazaars which will prevent a lot of diseases originating from flies remaining on fruits and food. I had a most happy time for more than eight days in Paghman and I shall never forget the beauty of the scenery, the climate and the charms of the Afghans who had gathered there together for the holidays.

CHAPTER VII

A TRIP TO BAMIAN

Once while chatting at the little café in the beautiful gardens of Paghman with Sardar Anayat-ullah Khan, he began describing to us the beauties of Bamian, where he said were to be seen colossal statues carved out of the rocks, of Lord Buddha. So fascinating was the description given by this handsome and loveable Prince that we decided to pay a visit to this historic place, more so, when we were told that his young son together with a party of about twenty young men of Royal Family were all proceeding thither. We therefore made preparations and our Afghan friend said all being well, we should leave the hotel at 5 o'clock in the morning, *Inshallah*! But the Sardar did not turn up till 8 o'clock and as such we never actually left Kabul till 9 a.m. We took a nice cup of Tea in the Indian Restaurant previously described and with sufficient food for the day and our car being fully loaded with men and luggage, we began rushing across the wild country. After about a couple of hours' run we came to a place called Chare-Kar where our friend had his friend as Chief Magistrate and Governor of the place. We were led to him through narrow zig-zag lanes till we came to an open yard where a handsome looking gentleman was to be seen seated in front of a writing table dressed in European style. Round him were some soldiers fully armed with loaded rifles and squatting in front of him were a few Afghans who had evidently come to him for justice. Beneath

the table was sitting a clerk of the Magistrate who had heaps of loose papers, all written in Persian, lying about him and on the Magistrate asking for a particular one he used to dig deep into them and fumbled about for quite a long time before he came across the right paper. Our friend's friend was a gentleman as polite and polished as could be found in any civilized country and he atonce got up and received us and closed the court for a time as he wanted to take us round the little bazaar and show us all the kindness he possibly could. We abruptly left the court yard and went round the bazaar with two soldiers in front and two behind the party of us four. We loitered round the bazaar for half an hour and took leave of our friend who very kindly had ordered a few big and luscious water-melons to be placed in our car for our use *en route*. We then motored on as we had to go some eighty miles North-west of Kabul in the valley of the Hazara country, towards Turkestan. The chief road leads from Kabul towards Turkestan and immediately at the northern foot of that prolongation of the Indian Caucasus now called Koh-i-baba. It was very rugged and a meandering river ran all along the road. Mile after mile on our way we passed through various villages each inhabited by different tribes.

The further we went the fairer and more flat-faced were the tribes till we came across the Hazara tribes whose women were ruddy and handsome. I noticed all throughout my tour in Afghanistan that in the villages and on the fields women

moved with open faces without any veils or purdah. Only a few shy women turned their faces away or raised their upper garments upto their noses just to avoid the curious gaze of foreign travellers. Every village had pariah dogs who for miles ran after our motor car and very nearly upset it, by running in between the wheels. Very probably the motor nuisance was too much for them and they wanted to prevent the traffic disturbing their peaceful siesta. At intervals we used to pass lovely green fields with men and women working at their ploughs or reaping wheat which is their only staple food for making Naan. Naan and fruits seem to be the only staple diet of the Afghans as there is scarcely anything else there to be had for the little money that these villagers could boast of. I was very much struck by the contentment of the people in Afghanistan very few of whom however seem to be begging or in rags as we commonly find beggars in India.

It was nearly 11 o'clock at night when we reached Bamian and the road looked dark and frightful. We were constantly fearing the onslaught of some robbers or murderers in such a quiet and God-forsaken part of the country. However, there appeared a tower with a little fort round it owned by an Officer of the State. We asked permission to stay in, which was given by the servants willingly, the officer himself being away from home. But we could command no food or water of any description at so late an hour and the very suggestion brought a frown on the face of the man, so that we had to

One of Buddha's colossal statues at Bamian. Note the scraping off of the upper portion of the face by some religious maniac

The author with some of his Indian and Afghan friends, inside one of the numerous caves at Bamian burnt down to efface Buddhistic paintings

quietly close our door and go to sleep in one small room, mud plastered.

Early morning as we got up and came out on a little terrace of the building, our eyes fell on two colossal statues carved out in a rock about a mile away from us looking like statues of Persian warriors. At first we thought it may have been the work of the Persians who once held sway over Afghanistan, but when later we went near this rock to examine these structures we discovered they were the images of Buddha. It seems Buddhistic influence was very rife in that part of Afghanistan some two thousand years ago and a whole rock extending over a mile in length had been carved out with three statues of Buddha, two on each side, and one in the middle in a sitting posture. The statues on each side of the rock depicting Lord Buddha in a standing posture were 173 ft. and 120 ft. high respectively, from head to foot. It is a beautiful piece of art in the Gandhara Style, but has been shamefully disfigured in the face. Whereas the two idols on both sides of the rock present Gautama standing in a meditative mood with a thin veil over his shoulders extending up to his knees, unfortunately the portion from the upper lip to the forehead is scraped off into one flat piece. In spite of this disfigurement by an unknown hand, the divine smile of Buddha still lingers and one could imagine what a piece of beautiful art these idols must have been in their entirety. The Chinese pilgrim Hsuan Tsang who saw them in their original splendour in A. D. 636 describes them as being painted with gold.

On two sides of these idols are stone staircases leading to a chamber near the head, which shows traces of elaborate ornamentation in azure and gilding. These two are burnt by a peculiar substance which has turned all the caves inside the rock pitch black as if a layer of coal tar had been poured on them. Here and there isolated paintings of Buddha in meditation or his mother or father are to be seen in beautiful azure and gilding from which one could imagine what the whole thing must have looked like in those far off days when all these small caves were peopled by the Buddhist monks. It is not known which fanatic ruler is responsible for the irreparable damage or loss to the ancient art. Probably, it can be attributed to Jengiz Khan who had long besieged Bamian and finally destroyed the fort. For full historical information, the readers may consult the "Rock Caves and Statues of Bamiyan" by Hon'ble M. G. Talbot.

What was my surprise when I came out on the terrace early in the morning to have a shave, and trying to look for a nail on the wooden structure of the door to hang my mirror on, I read the name of my esteemed friend, G. K. Nariman, written in pencil with the date of his visit to that place. Evidently he had stayed in the very room where we had slept the night over.

In the opposite direction of the rock caves and statues of Bamian was a ruined castle probably five centuries old which is believed by some of the Afghans to be the Castle of Zohak, the legendary usurper King of Persia described in the third chapter.

We made a stop of two days at Bamian during which we lived on beautiful fruits and home-made curd and pillau, cooked in purely Afghan style. Throughout, the climate was so agreeably cool and invigorating, that we looked quite rosy during the short stay we had at that historic place.

While returning to Kabul we came across a huge stone evidently forming part of a rock once and lying on the side of a turning inscribed in Bhrahmini character. I took a photograph of it with great care with a view to getting it transcribed by some scholar knowing the language to enable me to know what it meant.

Unfortunately, while returning to India my friend Mr. Mullick dropped one of his bags from his car which has never since been traced, so that all my photographs along with the bag have been lost.

I will never forget the disappointment at having lost some very rare photographs of the country where I do not know whether I will have the good fortune of going again.

All I could do was to draw the attention of our Afghan friends to get the block of stone removed to the Kabul Museum, as that was the only one of its kind we saw in the whole of Afghanistan, as a relic of Buddhistic influence in that country.

CHAPTER VIII

GHAZNI

THE LAND OF MAHMUD, THE IDOL BREAKER

We decided to see this famous city in Indian History, my friend and I. So much is said of the Great Mahmud and his frequent conquests of Somnath, the Temple of the Hindus in Kathiawar, that we thought it would be ill-advised to miss an opportunity to see his once famous Capital city wherein he had collected untold treasures, plundered from India. Accordingly, we began making enquiries from the Motor Transport Company as to the best method of reaching Ghazni, but to our disappointment we found they were not running their busses on that side. We therefore wended our way to a Serai and found it busy with motor busses, and a lot of Afghans with their bag and baggage, all chattering and shouting their throats hoarse, and evidently bargaining with the scoundrels of the motor drivers. After making due enquiries from the excited lot there, we found that there were no fixed busses nor any fixed time for them to carry us to that Ancient City. We therefore bargained with one wily Afghan Agent and it was agreed that we should go to the Serai the next day at noon. About eleven in the morning next day, we leisurely sauntered through the bazaar and came to the Serai thinking we were too early and found much to our chagrin that the buss for Ghazni had already left, and there was none other to go that way on that day. Early next day we again went to the Serai and caught hold of

the Motor Agent who gave a significant smile and said, "Inshallah, you will go to Ghazni to-day as soon as the busses come back from where the Police have taken them, as there was a raid somewhere, and all the busses were captured by them." We left our address saying we were staying very near the Serai and would keep ourselves ready if the buss would come and give us a lift. A solemn promise with a loud Inshallah was given and we were waiting all day with our bedding and everything ready in the hotel but the buss never came. Evidently it had already left prior to our calling at the Serai. It might be mentioned that there is no fix time for these busses to leave nor is there any responsibility attached to any one. These are privately owned busses by unscrupulous motor drivers who know nothing better than saying Inshallah and securing money in advance from passengers and leaving the rest to Allah. However we were determined to go to Ghazni and so on the third day we went early in the morning to the Serai with our bag and baggage and got in one of the busses which was supposed to go to Ghazni, but it was quite noon before the buss moved on as the owner had to wait till he found all the seats taken up, otherwise it would not be worth his while to use so much petrol over two passengers.

It was an extremely dusty journey extending over ninety miles and the road, though not bumpy to the extent I expected it to be, was nevertheless uninteresting. The passengers with us were a poor set of Afghans and on the whole rather quiet, so that

to pass the time my friend Mr. Darabshah Shroff who knew Persian well, began amusing the passengers with his anecdotes and his knowledge of the Ancient Persian Kings. When he started talking of Firdausi they pricked up their ears and felt greatly interested to learn who he was and what he had done. Naturally, though speaking Persian and not of the first order, these way-fairers were an illiterate lot and were not supposed to know of the immortal Homer of the East. It might be of general interest to the reader to learn who Firdausi was and what connection he had with our undertaking such a dusty and uninteresting hard journey of ninety miles off Kabul.

A Turk slave by name Subaktagin, once went out shooting and caught hold of a kid whose mother to save her life ran away into the jungles as fast as her four legs could carry her. But every few seconds she began casting a backward glance and bleeting as much as to say to Subaktagin that it was shameful on his part to thus make her so unhappy by separating her from her heart's delight. Subaktagin felt pity for her and let off the kid which joined her mother in no time. The same night, it is said, Subaktagin heard a voice in a dream telling him that as he had done an act of grace that day, he would one day become a king. And so he did, and established his kingdom in 977 A. D. He was followed by his son Mahmud of the historic fame who was very fond of hearing tales of the Ancient Persian heroes written in a book called Bastan Namah. Being very fond of Persian Poetry, he

entrusted the work of translating the book in Persian verses to Firdausi, the greatest genius among the poets in Persia. This Light of the Court, as his title given him by Mahmud suggests, though his real name was Abul Kassim Tusi, laboured hard for thirty years during which he composed some sixty thousand Persian couplets. When the work was entrusted to this gifted poet, the King had offered him one Mohor (Guinea) for every couplet, so that for thirty years' labour this gifted but poor poet ought to have got sixty thousand pounds sterling. But Mahmud was avaricious and Firdausi had made an enemy in the Chancellor of the Exchequer, so that one day when the King was in an ill mood, he was told that the Treasury was nearly empty and it would be folly to waste sixty thousand Guineas (Mohors) on Firdausi's couplets. The King took the Royal Treasurer by his word and ordered that Firdausi be sent sixty thousand silver coins instead, in other words, less than sixty thousand shillings. The poet was at a public bath, some miles away from where the King was, when an orderly presented him with three bags, each of twenty thousand silver coins, and the King's letter, informing him of the change of his mind. This enraged the old poet, who was then nearing seventy, so much, that he presented one bag to the man who brought the message and one to the keeper of the bath and one to an old lady nearby and tearing off the letter asked the orderly to convey to the King that he had not wasted his thirty precious years over this miserly reward. It would be long to narrate subsequent developments as to how Firdausi

satirized the great Mahmud by writing a quartette in a Mosque, ironically telling the King that had he been born of a lady and of a king he would have showered pearls and diamonds on him instead of proving himself a miser, how the king ordered him to be trampled underneath the feet of an elephant, how Firdausi saved himself from this miserable death by fleeing to the Court of his new patron, how eventually he roamed about from place to place, and died in a public street, on hearing a little boy repeat his self-same quartette which had driven the king to such a great rage. And then the history ends with even a greater tragedy than depicted above. It so happens, that late one evening the King returns from a hard day's work and is much worried and wishes one of his personal attendants to read Firdausi's great work Shah Namah, as it is called. Some very sweet and philosophical verses are recited which gladens the heart of the king, who suddenly recollects what grave injustice he has done to that genius whom he himself called the Light of the Court, and at once orders that sixty thousand gold mohors be sent to him forthwith. A courtier runs as fast as his horse can carry him and comes to the town where Firdausi was last supposed to be staying. As he enters the gate he sees a funeral procession. He enquires who was thus being carried to his grave and staggers to find it is none else than Firdausi for whom he has come. The king's atonement is too late and thus ends the life of the greatest Persian Epic Poet, who has left an immortal name for himself, and an invaluable treasure in the Persian literature.

It was partly with a view to do homage to this once mighty king Mahmud, who, directly or indirectly immortalised the Ancient Persian Kings through Firdausi's great work, and partly with a view to see this ancient historic capital city, that we started for Ghazni.

Once did we stop at a dilapidated village for refreshments, but there was hardly anything to be had except huge water-mellons, and the dust had accumulated so much all about us and over our luggage, that I was afraid even to open the tiffin basket and contented myself by sharing a water-mellon with my friend.

Along with us there was an Afghan with a huge long Naan round his waist belt, which he from time to time used to break and eat and looked so content over it the whole day.

Late in the evening we arrived at Ghazni so full of dust that we looked as if we had risen from our graves. There was not a sign of any broken down castle or palace or even a park or a garden, and I was greatly disheartened to find Ghazni, the once mighty city of an equally mighty king, so barren and void of any life around. And it was only nine hundred years ago that he was one of the mightiest Kings of the East, with his capital in that city. The buss stopped at a Serai, as miserable looking as the city itself, and it was fortunate that we had a friend from a noble Afghan family, so that we decided to go to his place for the night.

There was an old Fort on a hill, rather unique, in which the whole of the population of Ghazni had their quarters. Our friend was no exception and we therefore wended our way through the gate of the fort. To my surprise I found there was only one entrance to the fort, and as it was evening time, along with the farmers and other men and women labourers, their cattle too were driven in through the same gate. Inside the gate was a long narrow lane, on either side of which were shops of grain, mutton and munition dealers, goldsmiths, ironmongers, etc., etc. The lane was so narrow that hardly three men could walk abreast and the reader can then imagine how difficult it must be for the cattle and the farmers late in the evening, to go through it. All the houses inside were very quaint in their structure, mostly thatched, with very low doors and windows. It was a perfect maze, and but for our friend and his servants we would have been lost in that fort. An old maid greeted us and told us that the Agha (the lord of the house) had gone shooting but would be back presently. We loitered about the fort for over half an hour and found the place most uninteresting and I was most disappointed in not finding the slightest vestige of the existence of the once famous city. All that could be seen was miles and miles of flat plains with a patch of green here and there and with some sign of a ruined building.

Our friend came, a well-built, brown-eyed, fair and rather handsome Afghan, with polished manners, and apologized for having kept us waiting so long.

He led us into his small building which was the only one of its kind in the whole of Ghazni which had small doors and windows with glasses. Others were of a different design and not so good.

He atonce ordered tea, late though it was, which was served in unique Afghan fashion, not unlike Persian. A beautifully embroidered cloth was spread, on which cups and saucers were laid. The tea was served by the host himself; usually no milk is taken with tea. Green tea is used all throughout Afghanistan and as it is rather weak without milk it hardly suits the taste of those who are used to drinking good Indian tea with milk and sugar.

After some time was spent in pleasant chat our charming host ordered out dinner which was served on the same style as the tea. Two huge dishes of rice mixed with meat were placed in the middle, as also some delicious fruits, and one had to help himself from these according to his requirement. Of course fingers were used in eating the food.

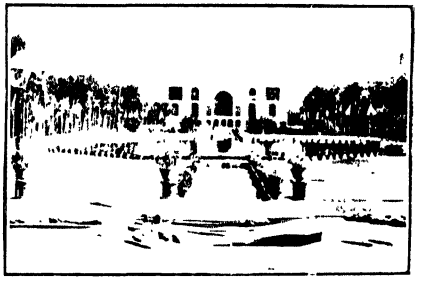
It was the fourth of September, and yet the height of Ghazni being nearly 7,280 feet I found it very cold and had to put on my overcoat to keep myself comfortable. Our host was a good musician and, as stated before, Indian music is mostly prevalent in Afghanistan, so that he entertained us to some good music on harmonium, and rubab (a stringed Afghan instrument like a mandoline) as well as on a Deccaphone which he had obtained from Bombay.

The next morning we were supposed to be returning to Kabul and so we got up very early to go to Mahmud's grave. Our friend being rather fond of shooting took a man with him to carry his gun for him and only a few yards from the fort we came across two beautiful minarets each 140 ft. high and about 400 yards apart, which are the only remnants to remind one of the once famous Mahmud of that place. The inscriptions on the top of the minarets are in Kufic, the language which was in use prior to the Arabic language, and they are built somewhat on the style of Kutub Minar, though not as beautiful as the latter. It is said that the first minaret was built by Mahmud himself to commemorate his victory of Somnath and the other one was completed by his son after his death.

We walked on after having taken photographs of these beautiful minarets, as will be seen from the picture on the opposite page, and met with some Afghan farmers carrying grapes on donkeys all the way to Kabul, in exchange for which they brought back from that city wheat for their family.

At a distance of a mile and a half, we came to the village of Rouzah, where lies the tomb of the once mighty monarch who had invaded India no less than seventeen times, and brought untold treasures to his country. The outside appearance is very unprepossessing, unlike the beautiful Mogul structures at Delhi and Agra. The walls are thatched with mud and straw, and it almost appears an irony of fate that such a mighty monarch is laid in such a dilapidated place

Minaret at Ghazni erected by Mahmud to commemorate the great victory at Somnath. The writing on it is in Kufic characters.



The view of the court of Justice at Kandahar not very far from the British Consulate

with such a poor structure over his grave. Inside the little hall is the marble grave of Mahmud with Kufic characters, invoking blessings on the soul of the dead king. There are on the walls, inscriptions describing the times of Mahmud's reign and his death, etc. It is said that this tomb was found in such a dilapidated condition that had not the late King Habibullah Khan taken special interest in it and kept up the structure by occasional repairs, there would hardly have been left any trace of the grave of the world-known conqueror of India. Many Afghan ladies daily visit the tomb, where they go in expectation of realising their most cherished desires in life, taking it to be the tomb of a saint. It is said, that the dust collected from near Mahmud's grave is sold in Kashmir and other places to deluded folks.

The heroes of all nations carry extraordinary tradition with them and Mahmud is no exception to the rule. Sirdar Ikbal Ali Shah in his "Afghanistan of the Afghans" writes, "....in Ghaznee they say that Mahmud on his seventeenth invasion of India plundered and ransacked the temple of the rich Somnath. There stood an idol in the centre of the *munder* (temple) of gigantic height. This was made of gold and was hollow and the worshippers used to drop their presents of jewels in its mouth. Mahmud struck the idol with a hammer by his own hand, and when his officers beseached him to spare the idol and accept money from its worshippers, he replied that on the Day of Judgment he would like to be called 'Mahmud the Idol Breaker,' and not 'Mahmud the Idol Seller.'

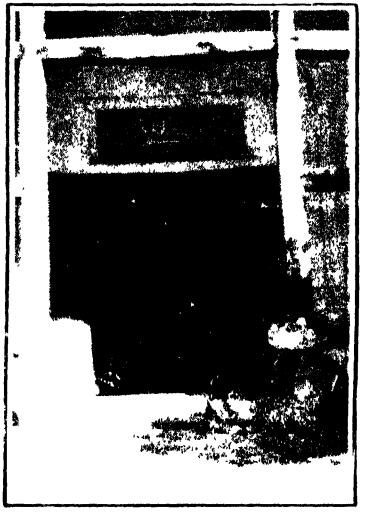
"Cartloads of rubies and diamonds, gold and silver fell out like a torrent of water from the idol's interior when Mahmud struck the idol. The wealth was brought to Ghaznee, and a portion of it was ordered to be placed at the Jumma Mosque at Ghaznee, while two other pieces were sent to Mecca and Medina in Arabia, to be used as steps of the Mosques. The Hindus, it is said, came to Ghaznee and sent a petition to Mahmud to say that the jewels of their idol might be retained by the king, but the idol should be exchanged for money.

"Mahmud, they say, ordered the idol to be reduced to powder, and that powder, mixed with flour, made the bread for the Hindus at night. The next morning Mahmud said in reply that he had no idol left, for they had eaten their object of devotion in their bread the preceding night.

"The worshippers of the Somnath were grieved at heart to know what had been done to them, and in agony and despair they returned to India." [1]

We hurried back to the fort and on the way saw the tomb of Mahmud's father Subaktagin, some two miles from the fort. This was lost sight of for years till Abdur Rahman located it and made a simple structure on it. Both these tombs, so simple and almost dilapidated and forgotten by the world, reminded me of how avaricious Mahmud was and how he on his death bed ordered out the whole of the

1 *Afghanistan of the Afghans*, p. 148



The exterior of the great Mahmud of Ghazni's tomb at the village of Rouza, some four miles from Ghazni

Here lies the famous Idol Breaker and the plunderer of the treasures of Somnath temple

treasure he had accumulated by constant fighting and bloodshed, to be brought near him, and how he then wept like a child saying he wasted so much of his energy in useless fighting and accumulating of wealth even at the cost of so much blood and after all there he was unable to carry a single coin with him to the world beyond. Such is indeed life and I was greatly struck by the contrast of Ghazni as we read of it in history and as I actually saw it with its two famous kings lying almost forgotten and leaving not a trace behind of their great pomp and power.

We ran for our buss but it was gone. Why? How? We could not say. Perhaps our kind host was too anxious that we should enjoy his hospitality a day longer and he had pre-arranged it. Perhaps the wily chauffeur did not care to wait for us when his buss was full. At any rate we were there per force a second day. There was nothing to do the whole day but to eat lovely fruits and pillao and keep on looking long distances through the field-glasses from the top of our host's house. In the evening we went round the bazaar and were interested in watching the poshtins[1] that were made from the goats' hair. These are well-made and are fairly cheap but the Afghans, not knowing the scientific method of curing the skins, they stink very much and one hardly feels like putting them on. There were bullets and cartridges as well as guns and swords made in the bazaar and were sold freely to any one. The question of license never occurred to the Afghans and as they

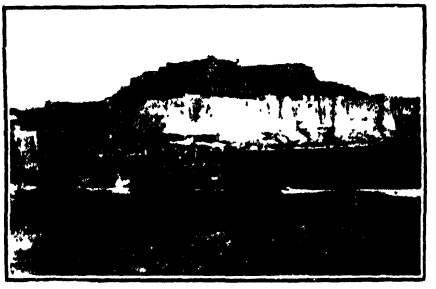
1 *Poshtins*=Long coats and overcoats made from sheep's skins.

are a brave race they think by right they ought to own arms. Afterwards I learnt that Amanullah Khan was trying to make it compulsory for people to have license before they could keep arms. But this was evidently too late. There were lamps manufactured in a crude way, though the top portions were imported from Germany. Among other local industries I saw soap and cloth being manufactured.

There are some beautifully painted walking sticks to be purchased in the Ghazni bazaar and I have brought two with me. But the peculiarity about these is that they are much too long and not comfortable in walking as we usually find ordinary sticks.

The next day we got our buss waiting for us at the Serai and we were thankful to leave the place at about 9 a.m. The journey back was marred by stoppages due to the petrol trouble but we had an optimist of a driver who had nothing to say but INSHALLAH to all our questions and even though he knew he would not reach Kabul till late in the evening, whenever asked if we would be there by the afternoon, he would cooly say, "INSHALLAH, you will." We were at a distance of some thirty miles from Kabul and I knew it would not be possible within an hour to reach there and yet when I asked my optimist Afghan how long it would take to reach there, "INSHALLAH," was the prompt reply, "within ten minutes." We never got in there till after two hours, due to punctures and engine trouble, you bet.

Inscription in Kufic character on one side of the tomb of Mahmud of Ghazni



The fort of Ghazni, within which remains the whole population of that city

CHAPTER IX

KANDAHAR, THE FRUIT GARDEN OF AFGHANISTAN

As stated in the beginning, due to want of time I had to change my intended motor trip to Afghanistan, and instead of entering the country from Kandahar, I entered it by Turkham. However, after having returned to India, I had to make a rush for Kashmir on business, and after finishing my work there, I returned to Quetta for Kandahar. I was surprised when again difficulty was created over my Passport, which stated that I intended going to Afghanistan via Peshawar, and as such I could not enter it again via Kandahar, unless a fresh Passport was made out. However, after much difficulty I managed to get my Passport visé'd, and left Quetta on the morning of the 14th October 1928. I reached Chaman the same evening, after having passed the famous tunnel, supposed to be more than three miles long, and having slept the night over in the Dak-Bungalow, I made preparations to leave Kandahar the next morning. There are one or two Indian motor car companies running their motors to and from Kandahar, and I engaged a front seat in one of these. After a short run, I came across a huge plain, miles in length and breadth, from where one could see a fort known as Killeh-Jadid, which was the Afghan Custom House on the way to Kandahar. The British Border on that side is marked by white stone pillars, placed at short distance, beyond which lies the Afghan territory. Just as our motor proceeded between the white stone pillars, we found a very tiny

little tent, hardly a foot or two above the ground, where the motor stopped, and two or three Afghans jumped out from underneath the tent and began looking at our passports. They then permitted our proceeding further and the motor dashed on. To my surprise there was no road to Kandahar. It was a wild barren sandy track of land, wherein the chauffeur had to find his way in the best manner he could, and so one could see motors proceeding in all zig zag manner, and sometimes tyres penetrated more than nine inches into the sand. The Customs House of Killeh-Jadid being at a distance of only seven miles, we should have been there in less than fifteen minutes, but there being no road and the sand being deep, our motor fully took an hour to do the distance. Our luggage was examined same as at Kabul ; every little article having been taken out of the bag. I had a sample tin of cigarettes, and the Customs man coolly helped himself to nearly half its contents and shoved it into his pocket smilingly, as much as to say, "if you grumble I will detain you for hours." One of the passengers with me had brought a new blanket which evidently he had bought at Chaman and not declared in the Customs schedule, as required by the Afghan Customs. This created a lot of howling and bustling about in the Custom House and the man pleaded not guilty, as it was for his personal use. Anyway the rather fat and rosy looking Afghan at the Custom House was in no mood to put up with explanations and very noisely ordered the poor man out, and yelled out to the subordinate to confiscate the blanket. I found our

motor was being detained by the chauffeur more than was necessary, and on enquiring I was told the passenger whose blanket was confiscated had not come and was still busy arguing with the subordinate of the Custom's Collector. After having waited for him full half an hour, we proceeded on to Kandahar and to our great surprise, after the motor had run about five minutes, the passenger came along and behind him came the blanket with some unknown man, which he smilingly took with him and the motor proceeded, as if nothing had happened. Upto this time I have not been able to make out what wonderful trick was played by the fellow passenger to get back his blanket, so emphatically ordered by the Custom Collector to be confiscated.

After another couple of hours' tiresome run we came to a place called Takht-e-Pool and once again we had to bring out our paraphernalia for Custom's crude examination. The journey was most dusty and I was feeling hungry and thirsty and was hoping that in a short time we would come across a way-side inn, from where we might get something to drink; but instead our motor stopped near a place where there was a shallow streamlet and a man sitting nearby, selling water-melons. My tiffin box got so buried in dust that I was almost frightened to open it, so I left it alone and contented myself by pertaking of a water-melon which was my only lunch that day. I then proceeded down the stream to fill my water-bottle for a drink and as I proceeded, I saw the seeds and peels of water-melons lying about and a man

performing ablution of a most delicate and filthy nature. It was a shock to me to see that the only source of water supply between the huge track of land from Chaman to Kandahar should be so lightly treated and made poisonous for any other purpose. I dropped my bottle on the spot and returned in disgust, and reached Kandahar late in the evening, without having taken a drop of water; and yet to my surprise other passengers with me and in various other motor cars thought nothing of drinking the water from the same defiled spot, or of washing their faces and hands with it. Proceeding, a few yards away from the main motor road, we saw some armed Afghans with rifles across their body, waving their hands to us as if in salution, and our young chauffeur on seeing this speeded the motor so much that I was almost wondering if he was suddenly taken ill. Later on he explained that these were the robbers, who since the past week were harassing passengers and robbing them of their property. At last we reached the Custom House at Kandahar and once again went through the tedious task of Custom's examination. As I was entering the main gate of the city called Sheher Darwaza, I was greatly surprised at another Afghan stopping the motor and wanting to re-examine the goods. I strongly protested and explained to him that it was hardly a hundred yards from there that the main Custom officer had seen my luggage apart from three previous examinations *en route*, and he coolly told me I had done him no obligation by so doing. However, on my flatly refusing to show the luggage the matter ended, and I entered the gate, and met

my host, Khan Bahadur Sardar Mohd. Khan, His Majesty's counsel at Kandahar.

It took me fully six hours by motor car from Chaman to reach my destination.

As I was entering the walls of the city of Kandahar, I was curious to find out why people ran in batches of fives and tens. On enquiry I found that three dacoits were to be blown through the gun within a few minutes. I ran to the spot, which was crowded by Afghan men, women and children. There were three nasty looking dacoits, who had been captured a few days before by the king's soldiery, for looting and harassing the wayfarers passing to and from Kandahar and Chaman on business. With a view to set an example, and to keep the road perfectly safe for travellers, the special council of people at Kandahar had ordered that these culprits be blown through the guns. It was an experience of my life to have seen this rather revolting spectacle. The culprits were marched through the city, with heavy chains round their body and with a strong escort of soldiers with loaded guns and were eventually brought near the hill, in front of which was installed a solid gun. A blacksmith was asked to break the chain, which was so strong and thick that it took him fully five minutes to break off the fetters. The culprits were then tied in turn to the mouth of the gun, facing the hill. At a sign from the officer, a brand was applied to the gun powder. A loud thunder was followed by a blinding flash of light and a huge column of smoke, and in less than a second the man was high up in the air, coming down

in a rapid twirl, and dropping with a thud stark dead. One was cut clean half across the body and the other came rattling down in pieces. Where I stood, a piece of flesh from the dead dropped near my feet, and before I could realise what it was, a little Afghan boy, hardly ten years old, picked up the piece of flesh and began examining it most curiously. No doubt, to people with stern hearts, such a deterrent punishment is necessary to preserve law and order in the country. I was told by a resident of Kandahar, that five years ago when there was a similar occurrence, one arm of the culprit was wrenched off the body with such force, that it struck a spectator on the forehead and killed him on the spot, and the man next to him caught the same arm in his eyes and was permanently blinded. And yet it surprised me to see the people of Kandahar watching this heart-rending spectacle nonchalantly and with a serenity with which we might see a boxing tournament or a football match.

I returned to the Consulate and after a good dinner and congenial talk with my friend, the Khan Bahadur, went to sleep. Next day I went round the bazaar on business.

Kandahar is a square built city, surrounded by a wall of $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles circuit from 20 ft. to 30 ft. high, with an average width of 15 ft. The bazaar is all white washed and looks much cleaner and more open than the bazaar of Kabul. There are few buildings of which Ahmed Shah's tomb with his twelve children plays a prominent part and really looks artistic. The popula-

tion is about 40,000 only. There are miles and miles of orchards from where train-loads of fruits are being sent to India every season.

Four miles west of the present city, are to be seen the ruins of the old city of Kandahar, looted and plundered by Nadir Shah in 1738, and the foundation of which is ascribed to Alexander the Great by historians. There are some boundaries to be seen among these ruins showing the extent and position of Babar's realm.

There are miles and miles of gardens, a short distance from the city of Kandahar, where are grown beautiful fruits of various kinds including pomegranates, grapes, water-melons, etc.; the ground is so fertile and fruit grows in such abundance, that for full four months of the season there runs a fruit train from Chaman to Quetta every night, carrying the delicious Kandahar fruits for people in India, and this indeed is a solid income to the Afghan Government.

I returned back to Chaman the next day as there was hardly very much to do at Kandahar, and the journey backwards was the same through the dusty tracks of land. I noticed however, that some part contained a kutcha made road, which I was told was made for King Amanullah Khan when he left his country for Europe, and though the king had returned, yet for some unknown reason even the kutcha road was not allowed to be used by the motorists and they were made to go through the unbeaten path, where occasionally we found corpses of dead animals being eaten by birds and dogs. The only

thing that I am glad of about Kandahar, is the novel experience of seeing the dacoits blown through the guns, and but for it, I should have felt most disappointed that I ever went to see Kandahar which otherwise boasts of nothing.

CHAPTER X

FOLK-LIFE OF AFGHANISTAN

"Even before he enters the world the Afghan creates a stir" writes Sirdar Ikbal Ali Shah in his "Afghanistan of the Afghans." According to him, "preparations are made for his arrival, because ceremonies have to be performed which will, as is believed, exercise an influence on his future life." The mother-to-be, is confined to her room in the eighth month or even earlier, according to the state of her health, and she is watched over by midwives. These midwives are not trained, as is the case in the West. A woman practises because her mother was a midwife, and although her knowledge as a nurse may be limited—too severely limited in not a few cases—she is invariably expert in a sense that the folk-lorist understands, and is inclined to encourage, if the truth be confessed.

"Relatives begin to arrive a few days before the birth is due. When it becomes known that the birth is imminent, others arrive, the men armed with matchlocks. When it is announced to those waiting outside the house that the babe is born, the guns are fired, tomtoms are beaten, and the players of musical instruments set up a clamour at once shrill and deafening. But everyone strikes the appropriate human note. "Happy and prosperous be your days!" each says to the other. "Happy and prosperous be your days!" is the wish expressed on behalf of the new-born babe too. The guns and tomtoms scare

away all evil influences; the good wishes are productive of good influences. All hearts are opened in this time of rejoicing and congratulation for a living mother and a living child, and buckets of grain are distributed to the poor. The imagination as well as the heart of the Afghan is touched by the mystery and crisis of birth.

"In connection with the shooting, this is a well-defined custom. If the babe is a girl, seven or five shots are fired, but if a boy, fourteen shots or even more. It matters not about what time of the day or night the birth takes place. The clamour is as loud in the darkness as in the daylight. No one in an Afghan village requires to wait for a morning paper to advertise the hour and place of birth; often in the dead of night people are awakened by the birth demonstration, only, however, to repeat one to another the appropriate good wish, "Happy and prosperous be your days."

"The date and hour of the child's birth is of great consequence. Friday is a lucky birthday. Happy is the babe who sees the light on that day. A child born at early morning is assured of success in life; a child born in a storm is expected to endure ill-health or to have to face other troubles in the days to come.

"When a few months old, the head-shaving ceremony is performed by the family barber. The child is dressed in gaudy clothing; the barber spreads an embroidered handkerchief, wets the hair with

rose-water from a silver cup, and shaves with a new razor. This practice has originated in the belief that the hair of a new-born child is unclean.

"Friends and relatives attend the ceremony. They dine after the barber does his part, and are afterwards entertained to a musical programme. While the instrumentalists are engaged the barber presents the silver cup that held the rose-water, and each guest drops a coin into it. All the coins must be silver, and they all go to the barber's banking account. The shaving is repeated time and again until the child is four or five years old. The first shaving alone, however, is a ceremonial one.

"When a child is cutting its teeth, the event is celebrated by a gathering of relatives. In time, when the milk teeth begin to come out, they are thrown into a mousehole, so that the new teeth may be sharp and strong as those of a mouse.

"The child is kept on milk diet until about three years of age. Then it is put on "grain and hard diet." The occasion is celebrated in ceremonial manner. The family collect in a room, and the parents recite long passages from the Koran. The child's neck is adorned by charms, including luck-stones, luck-wood, and the carved claw of a lion or tiger. In addition to the charms, a sacred pendant is worn ; the pendant for a girl is more ornamented than that given to a boy. The sacred pendant may be a coin, or a piece of metal inscribed, or perhaps a jewel attached to gold or silver chains. For a year or two the child

is freed from ceremonials. When, however, a new dress is put on, a visit is paid to the relatives, who drop coins into the pockets.

"A boy's education begins at eight or nine. He may attend a mosque school or a public school, which is partly supported by the Government. The books used are prepared by educationists, chiefly notable Mullas, and the Mullas appoint the teachers. Every village has its school. The more important towns, such as Kabul, Kandahar, Ghaznee and Herat, have large and well-organised educational institutions, the more advanced being somewhat like Western universities. In these a training is given in the more important Oriental languages. Science is not neglected, but religious philosophy bulks largely in the curriculum. Sufis and Mullas have almost complete control of these universities, which are attended by students from many lands. The schools at Badakshan, a town on the borders of Afghanistan and Turkestan, are attended by many students from Bokhara.

"I now come to the betrothal and wedding customs and ceremonies. The contracting parties do not act on their own account. There is no preliminary love-making period, as in the West, but as arranged between parents or guardian, a proceeding not entirely unknown in the West. The young people have no opportunity of making advances or proposals. Purda (seclusion) makes it impossible for the young people to meet. When a boy is advancing in his teens, his parents open negotiations with the parents

of some coy maid who has been discovered by some woman hired to play the part of social spy. This lady, who keeps her engagement secret, visits various houses and reports to the gentleman who has engaged her on the habits and manners of families, on the beauty and behaviour of possible brides, and, last but not least, on the financial position of desirable girls. The pedigrees of a girl's father and mother are scrutinised, and, if the parents are dead all particulars regarding the cause of death and their ages when they passed away. If a beautiful orphan has parents who died of some disease, there is hesitation about contracting a family alliance. The Afghan gives some consideration to eugenics.

"Of great importance is the question of class, and of great importance the question of sect. Men with long pedigrees do not wish their sons to marry the daughters of upstarts. Shiahs will not intermarry with Sunnis, for, although both sects are Islamic, there is a gulf between them as there is between Protestants and Roman Catholics in the Christian world. Shiahs are of Persian extraction, and are called Quzilbashi, or merely Quzilbash. Then Syeds will not give a daughter except to a Syed. Syeds are direct descendants of the Prophet Mahomed. A Moslem girl will not wed a Hindu, although there are Hindus in Kabul. Spiritual leaders, i. e. Peers or Sufis, will not give their daughters to a commoner. The young man must, however, belong to the family of another spiritual leader.

"One week before the marriage the bride seeks the solitude of her chamber, surrounded by her companions. She has to undergo a course of beauty treatment. Early each morning she is massaged with a paste made of almonds, aromatic substances, and flour and butter, and then has a bath. This operation is repeated in the evening. Meanwhile she is put on light diet.

"In the meanwhile the poor girl-bride is subjected to very severe beauty treatment. Some elderly ladies massage her face, wash and put oil and perfumes on her hair. The most cruel part of the toilet is the custom of Tar Zaddani—removing of the superfluous hairs of the face. This tar zaddani is composed of Persian words—tar, string; zaddani, art of beating—and it is effected in a curious manner.

"A thin silken string is held by one lady, and brought in contact with the skin; a second lady pulls the thread out, and, giving it a spin with her index finger and thumb, lets it go. It strikes the skin. The string motion pulls the hair out, and the position of the string is changed after each stroke. It is a very painful operation, and must be performed on every lady whether she has these hairs or blemishes on her face or not. The face having been washed with warm water, without soap, is well powdered.

"The old ladies in charge dress her and see her repeatedly in her wedding clothes before she is finally passed. Her tresses are perfumed, her face powdered, her eyes are brightened, and, as a finishing

touch, sitaras (stars) are struck here and there over her face. These "stars", or beauty-spots, are small round discs, with a hole in the centre and a slit across. Sitaras are of various colours—golden, silvery, red, blue, purple and green. Crescents of the same kind are also used, and the shine on them produces a remarkable variegated effect. A cap is put on her head and a feather fixed in it.

"The financial strain of the wedding is in large measure placed on the bride's people. They have to erect the Shadi Khana, provide accommodation for the guests, and the number of the guests often reaches as many as a thousand people. The cost of the food is divided between the bridegroom's father and the bride's father.

"The bridesmaids prepare a place in the largest hall of the house for another ceremony, called aina mushaf (Persian-aina, mirror; mushaf, charming and beautiful face, meaning a mirror in which a charming face is reflected). This is, perhaps, the oldest custom in connection with the wedding ceremony. A mirror is placed before the bride, and the bridegroom is asked to sit on the bride's left. A shawl is held over them, and the bride has to unveil and look in the mirror. Then husband and wife see each other's faces for the first time. It is, as a matter of fact, their first real meeting. The bride is shy and does not open her eyes, and the bridesmaids and others pass many humorous remarks, chaffing her freely.

"A silver engraved bowl is then brought, with a little sherbet, and a plate of white rice pudding. The bridegroom is to drink a little of the sherbat and offer the bride a sip. Often she closes her lips tightly, but force is applied and a spoonful dropped into her mouth; so also with the rice pudding. Sherbet and rice must always be tasted first by the man. A shower of roses announces the termination of the custom, and when the bridegroom attempts to rise he finds he is held down to the floor, a corner of his coat having been sewn to the carpet while he was engaged in aina mushaf. At this there is a roar of laughter. The offender is found, and is probably a younger sister of the bride. She refuses to undo the stitches unless a gold coin is given to her. As soon as this toll is paid the bridegroom calls his attendants to bring his shoes, but it is found that one of them is missing. Someone declares that she knows who possesses the shoe and that it will be duly returned on payment of two gold coins.

"The bridegroom is rescued from his tormentors after the payments are made."

The following chapter from the same author on the Customs, Religious Rites, Ceremonies of Burials, etc., may be of interest to the readers :—

"As soon as it is known that a man is about to die in African phraseology, the physicians have "declared their reply" (jawab dadand) that the patient will not live long—the news spreads like fire, and relations begin to collect.

"If the dying man has not made a will, he calls a qazi and dictates and signs one. The women-folk dislike to hear of a will; the word is never uttered when anybody is unwell. It is equivalent to expressing an ill wish. If they enquire as to how the patient is, they generally say, 'We have heard that the enemies of your husband are indisposed.'

"A dying man calls his sons, daughters, and wife to his bedside. He makes a short speech to them in which he wishes them good-bye, and advises them to live in peace and harmony as they have done during his lifetime. Then he places his hand on his wife's head and asks her to be considerate to her children, and appoints his eldest son as the head of the family. All weep most profusely. The dying man warns them—as a rule—that his soul will not rest in peace if they weep after his death or do not live together in harmony and peace.

"When death at length comes, loud wailing resounds through the fort. Relations and servants weep profusely. Someone sits down near the dead person and reads the sura yasin (one of the chapters of the Koran). Other members of the family and clan come to join in the burial procession, and the house is soon quite full.

"No one is allowed to go into the room where the dead person may be lying; a dim light burns there, and two or three hafiz, or chanters of the Koran, by rote read the suras in a low tone, while all without is wailing and crying. Some are wrapped in mournful

silence. A man is at once despatched to make the grave ready, another to bring white shrouds and incense and earthenwares. In a piece of ground in the family garden is dug a temporary grave, called *lahd*, and there the dead is washed and bathed. Then this grave is closed up and made green with turfs of grass.

"Water-carriers and others engage themselves in the act of washing the corpse, and two or three near relations rub the body, while the water-carrier spurts water from his *mashk*—a goat-skin containing water. The big toes of the dead person are tied with a strip of white muslin, and a white sheet is carried right upto the head and knotted there. Benzoin burns all the time, and the *lahd* is curtained all round. Then the wooden frame, like a bedstead, is brought forward, a white cloth is spread on it, and the corpse, supported by six people, is transferred from the *lahd* board on to the bedstead. Two sheets cover the dead body, and the corners are tied at the ends by white strips, and then the *jenaza* (the funeral) preparations are completed.

"A rose perfume is sprinkled over the *jenaza* no flowers are laid there, but in some families the outer cover of the bedstead is inscribed with verses from the Koran. The burial takes place as soon as possible. A short prayer, called fatiha, is read before lifting the bier, which is then carried on shoulders, the six nearest relatives supporting the bedstead, one at each corner and two in the middle; no one goes in front of the *jenaza*.

"If the dead is a woman, all the ceremonies are the same, but the washing, *ghusl* (Persian, bath) is done by a female of the family—usually the mother or some other elderly person. The bier is then carried from the female quarters to the courtyard, where the funeral service is performed.

"When people hear that So-and-So is dead, they utter these sentences from the Koran : "Inna Lillaha wa inna alaih rajayun" (Arabic, "We are owned by God, and to Him we must all return.")

"The funeral service is held in the courtyard or a field where large numbers of people may be able to pray. The bier is placed in front and all arranged facing it. The Imam, or priest, leads the prayer. All fold their arms, one over the other, round their waist, direct their gaze downwards at the words of "Allaho Akbar"—"God is Great"—from the Imam, and a silent prayer is read for the peace of the soul.

"When the prayer is over, the bier is carried to the grave, and all the mourners follow in procession, repeating prayers for the dead. The grave, which has been prepared beforehand, consists of a ditch six feet deep, with an underground chamber running to the right side, in which the body is to be placed. This chamber is called *baghli*, or caress.

"It is the custom that if any one meets a funeral procession in his way, whether he knows the person or not, he must accompany it for at least forty steps and repeat the prayer for the dead. If he is in a car-

riage or riding a horse, he must come down and join the mourners, and must not pass the *jenaza*, but wait till the procession passes, before he continues his journey.

"When the bier reaches the grave, two men descend into the grave and the corpse is lowered gently and placed in the chamber. The direction of the grave is determined according to the situation in which lies the Holy City, Mecca. The feet of the dead man must be towards the west, and the head to the east, the face being towards Mecca. When the men come out of the grave, a short prayer is repeated by all who are standing round. Then the boards are placed in position and a mat laid over them and the earth thrown in. All the mourners throw handfuls of earth, and finally the grave is closed and a mound raised over it. A temporary gravestone is erected, and below it a small lamp burns feebly. Men are appointed to watch the grave, and, one or two Mullas having read passages from the Koran, the party wend their way back to their respective homes.

"It may be mentioned here that in some cases the chamber in which the body rests is constructed of bricks and a space two feet high is left below the covering planks. It is believed that when the horn is sounded on the Day of Judgment all the dead will arise. It is desired that when they awake their eyes will gaze at the Holy Kaba at Mecca. The space left above the grave is the height of an average man when he sits erect, as every one will sit when he hears the last summons.

"The chambers of many graves are not lined with bricks, nor are any structures placed over them for some people think that the body will have a hard struggle in leaving the grave at the Blowing of the Horn if the graves are covered with cement and stones.

"After the burial the chief mourners return to the house of the deceased. There the head of the clan addresses the womenfolk, counselling them not to grieve, for it was the will of Allah that So-and-So has died, and that his soul should be accorded Divine Acceptance. Then the party is asked to dine, and after a prayer they disperse.

"The widow and the female relatives of the deceased wear no colours and no ornaments. Some widows never again use colours, but always appear in pure white, without ornaments.

"Feasts called *Jum'arati* (Persian, of Thursday) are held every Thursday, and mourners are invited to dinner and to read the Koran for the dead. Similar ceremonies are also observed on the fourteenth day and the fortieth day after the death. On the fortieth day, which is called *Chahlum*, friends and relations come from far and near to join in the mourning, and all go to the grave to pray there. The women attend on this occasion. When a relation comes from a distance to join in the *Chahlum*—one who has not been at the burial ceremony—he shakes hands with all and expresses sympathy.

"Chahlum being over, there is no other formal function till a year has gone past. Then the mourning

called *sali* (Persian, pertaining to year, yearly) is held. All relatives go to the grave and spend a whole day there in mourning. The lamp-lighting takes place each Thursday for long afterwards, and a Mulla may be appointed to read the Koran regularly over the grave for a number of years. On Fridays after the prayer, people visit the graveyard and read a portion of the Koran and send blessings to the soul of their relatives.

"On Thursdays, after *isha* (last prayer or night prayer) one may see a whole household sitting round the lahd, where the body of the dead has been washed. Chapters from the Koran are read for the benefit of the departed. The scene is one of great solemnity, and is very touching. The mourners read a portion of the Holy Texts, and pause with uplifted, beseeching hands. With deep reverence they first send the blessings of the Koran to the soul of the Prophet Mahomed. Then very tenderly, their sorrow sweetened by piety, they send heartfelt blessings to the soul of their own remembered dead. So do love and duty endure, for death cannot cause them to wither and decay."

CHAPTER XI

AFGHAN WIT AND HUMOUR

Every nation in the world has its own peculiar wit and humour and so have the proverbial fanatic Afgans. When their women have to express their strong resentment against their own sex, prompted by jealousy, the inborn nature of womenkind all over the world, they say that so and so is a *Tota Chashm* that is parrot eyed. In other words it suggests immodesty. Similarly a man with a weak heart (a coward) is termed *Sheesha-Dill* i.e., of a heart made of glass.

A hypocrite is termed *Gurgay Aatashee* that is, a wolf of fire, the fire of Hell, hence an associate of Satan.

Gurbay Miskeen is a term applied to a meak and gentle man, which literary means a mild cat. Similarly a spiteful man is termed *Shutar Keenah*, in other words, a spiteful camel. It is well known that camels keep their spite for years and take any opportunity to revenge themselves.

"The Afghan sayings are very varied in kind" says Sirdar Ikbal Alishah. "In some of them moral teachings are so intermingled with the fighting spirit that it is difficult to say whether a saying was uttered in a mosque or on a battlefield. But all the same they are pithy, and portray much of the life of the hills. Women form one of the three essential factors and causes, for which an Afghan would fight,

the other two being liberty and money. No one will ever stand a reflection which may be made on any female of his clan, for the female respect is regarded as the nose of the Afghan nation. Yet henpecked husbands are the butts of humorous remarks. A proverb runs :

"A tortoise is no fish, though it swims,
Nor a bat a bird, though it flies.
So a henpecked man is no man, though
he wears male garments."

"Many other good sayings are plentiful: The throne for the Ameer, the scales for the merchant, the plough for the farmer, and the sword for an Afghan" [1] are really suggestive.

"Some of the Afghan sayings and proverbs are terse. The vices and virtues are dealt with. Hypocrisy is well indicated in the phrase :

"Under his arm the Koran and his eye on the bullock."

"Like a mad dog he snaps at himself" and "You cannot clap with one hand alone" illustrate bad temper.

"Courteousness is beautifully expressed :

"Be it but an onion, let it be given graciously."

"Decision and resolution are contained in the advice :

1 Afghanistan of the Afghans pp. 116-117.

"Do not take hold of sword-grass, but if you do, grasp it tight."

"Industry is somewhat equivocally dealt with in the short phrase :

"Whoever loves, labours."

"Some other sayings are proverbial, as :

"Doubt destroys faith as salt does honey."

"God will remain, friends will not."

"Parents say: "Our boy is growing"; they forget that his life is, in reality, shortening."

"An Afghan will on certain occasions say : "Is the Ameer dead that there is no justice ?"

"Though God is Great, yet He sends no rain from a clear sky."

"Though your enemy be a rope call him a snake."

"The ungrateful son is a wart on his father's face. To leave it is a blemish ; to cut it a pain."

"Shoes are tested on the feet, a man on trial."

"When the knife is over a man's head, he remembers God."

"A frog mounted on a clod and said that he had seen Kashmir."

"If a mouse were as big as a bullock, it will be always the slave of a cat."

"To say 'Bismillah' brings blessing, but not in wicked pursuits."

"Our silver lining to every cloud is reproduced in :

"Though the clouds be black, yet white drops fall from them."

"Love of riches in old age is denounced in the following :

"O Greybeard, thou eatest earth!"

Afghanistan of the Afghans pp. 119-120.

Ibid p. 120.

CHAPTER XII

THE FALLEN IDOL

On a beautiful moonlight night, somewhere in the month of February, I was dining with an Afghan friend in my bungalow, when suddenly the evening's Newspaper announcing in big type some serious troubles in Afghanistan, came to hand. I atonce enquired from my friend, who was a high Afghan Official, whether there was any truth in the report. He began laughing at the idea that anything so serious could happen in Afghanistan, when there was Amanullah Khan as an Idol on its throne. He lightly passed the matter, saying these informations generally filter through chauffeurs and other irresponsible men who have no accurate knowledge of any sort, and as such, such reports have no value whatever. However, I little dreamt that the matter would come to such a pass when Amanullah Khan would have to bid for his throne.

When I was in Afghanistan, Amanullah Khan seemed to be so secure on his throne and he appeared so sure of his safety, that he went through the narrowest lanes of his capital any time, unarmed and unguarded, and the remotest part of the country appeared to be as safe for travelling, as Kabul itself. However events did change, and the once mighty monarch is now a fallen Idol. The reasons are not very far to seek. An independent, war-like, biggoted nation, with a staunch faith in religion which debarred all foreign education, manners and customs from

entering into their hearth and home, could not brook interference even from a monarch when he wanted to strike at the very root of their social manners and customs. For instance, how can a man who considers the white races of foreign countries as Kaffirs, (heathen) tolerate the very idea of putting on a Kaffir's dress? How can a nation that so jealously guards its women folk, tolerate the idea of leaving their wives, daughters and sisters, to go unveiled? How can a nation so staunch in its faith, as to be almost biggoted, tolerate the change of its social manners and customs? How can a nation who consider the knowledge of the whole world to have centred in their sacred Koran, tolerate the idea of sending their ladies to Kaffir countries for modern education, the idea of which to them is so revolting? How can a nation entirely under the influence of Syeds and Mullahs (Priests and Ecclesiastics) tolerate the shooting through guns and hanging by ropes of those, whom they consider next to their prophet, and as such rebellion was inevitable and religious intolerance got upper hand, and sided with a mere merauder, called Baccha-e-Saqa. He according to the reports was once a water-carrier's son, and had worked in a tea shop as well as on roads as a stone breaker. And pray who is this merauder King, who changes his name from Baccha-e-Saqa, (water-carrier's son) to Habibullah Ghazi (Habibullah, the defender of religion.) I would rather let my friend Mr. N. D. Mallik speak of him in his own language, as it appeared in the Sind Herald of Karachi.

Baccha-e-Saqa or Habibullah Ghazi, who usurped the throne of Amanullah and his brother Anayatullah

"'Hush Koo, pesh marau' shouted a score of Pathans on the road between Istaliff and Sarai Khoja, the latter place being about 22 miles from Kabul towards Kohistan. They spoke in Persian which meant, 'take care and do not proceed further,' and which was apparently tentamount to a serious warning.

"But why?" I enquired, at the same time telling my chauffeur to stop the car.

"Sahib, a party of outlaws is hiding itself beyond yonder wall of the ruined building. They have set fire to a motor lorry and have killed the driver. Look at the body of the unfortunate man lying across the road," was the reply.

"What should we do, Sahibzada Sahib?" I asked my host who had taken me out to show the Switzerland of Kabul as Istaliff is called. It is a lovely place with three thousand houses on the top of the hill, with beautiful gardens of dainty fruits at its foot and with a copious supply of water from a running stream.

"We should not take the risk and had better pass the night elsewhere than at Sarai-Khoja (which was our destination)," said my friend.

"Better tell my chauffeur where to go," I told my friend.

"We turned to the left as directed by the Sahibzada. Hardly had we proceeded about 200 yards when I saw a house on fire. On enquiry I was

told that there was a small village nearby and the house in question formed a part of it. "Let us help in putting out the fire," said I.

"Don't you attempt any such thing, Sahib," said one of the Pathans. "The outlaws who have killed the motor driver also did this mischief. They have warned the villagers that any one trying to save the property will have their own property treated in that way," added the man.

"Whose house is that and why has it been set fire to?" I enquired.

"The house belongs to one Abdul Samad. Some days back the outlaws visited the village and demanded a sum of one thousand Kabuli rupees from him as their dues as 'uncrowned Kings of Afghanistan.' The man pleaded poverty. He sought the protection of the Kabul police as he feared he might be done to death. A guard of policemen was deputed to keep watch and ward over his house. The outlaws got the wind and waited for an opportunity to avenge themselves on him. In a few days the guard was withdrawn and Abdul Samad went to Kabul on business. The outlaws came to his house and told his wife to get out of the house as they were going to set fire to it. She begged and appealed for mercy, and even went to the extent of borrowing a sum of one thousand Kabuli rupees from her neighbours to pay their 'dues' but they did not listen to her entreaties. They set fire to the house and made the villagers, whom they

collected, to take an oath on the Koran not to help Abdul Samad's wife in extinguishing the fire," explained my informant.

"But who are these outlaws, do you know?" I enquired.

"One of them, is Habibullah who is the leader of the gang, and the other is Said Hussan. They have forty to fifty followers. The leader fell out with the Afghan authorities some three years back and has taken to plundering. The gang visits off and on a village here and a village there and collects provisions in the form of atta, ghee, sheep and cash.[1] They had not been arrested up till now as the orders of His Majesty Amanullah Khan are to catch them alive. Besides, they are very sure shots and so the Government officials do not want to risk their lives. Once, it is said, the Hakim of Char-i-kar in whose jurisdiction the present raid was committed, tried to pursue the party. The leader had a few followers with him. They all climbed on the hills like goats while the Hakim was at the foot of the hills just thinking how to follow them up. Habibullah saw him and said "You better go away and do not risk your life, I am a sure shot which I want to prove. I will tear off a small piece of flesh from your right heel without causing any serious injury to your body. 'Be ready.' Immediately there was a click of the rifle. The Hakim touched his right heel and found that he had received a scratch from the outlaw's bullet. He quietly withdrew and distributed alms for being saved. So I was told.

1 Atta=Flour, Ghee=Clarified butter.

"Have they committed many murders before this?" I asked. "No, this was the first victim who came under the fire of the outlaw's rifle. They never killed anybody but stripped wayfarers of cash and clothings. The unfortunate motor driver was going to Kabul side with a number of passengers in his lorry. The outlaws, after burning Abdul Samad's house had come on the public road to stop the traffic as they wanted to gain time to disappear and not to be pursued by the military or the police. Habibullah asked the driver to go back but he did not care. He was given another warning yet he did not heed. Then he was given an ultimatum either to return or to be prepared to lose his life. He still insisted upon proceeding towards Kabul with the result that he was shot dead. The passengers were asked to go back which they did. Then a match was applied to the petrol tank of the motor lorry and the conveyance burnt," said the man.

"Sahibzada Sahib, we had better send your servant back to Sarai Khoja to tell your women-folk that we all are safe, as otherwise they would be naturally anxious to know what became of us as soon as the news of the murder of a motor driver reaches them, which is bound to spread before long," said I.

"So the servant of my host left for Sarai Khoja and we all took shelter in a fort belonging to one Abdul Qayum who was a friend of my host. He gave us meals and beddings and made us comfortable for the night. He bolted the gate of his fort from

inside and deputed a couple of sentries to keep watch. I had an Afghan official of importance with me who had accompanied me from Kabul after accepting my host's invitation. We heard the buzzing sound of the bullets flying all night but it was at a considerable distance from the fort which led us to believe that the outlaws' gang was having an encounter with some other riflemen.

"Early next morning we had tea and were thinking of taking leave of our new host after thanking him for the shelter he had given us for the night and for his hospitality, when the servant of the Sahibzada returned from Sarai Khoja.

" Why have you come back ?" asked my host.

" To find out as to how you all fared last night ? " said he.

" Did you meet the outlaws and their gang on the way ? " asked my host.

"Yes, I saw Habibullah and Said Hassan sitting near the broken wall of the dilapidated building, about 100 yards from the place you had turned your motor to the left. You did well not to proceed further otherwise you would have been made a sure target for them. Allah be praised," said the servant.

"The next day we returned to Kabul and met a Bania, a well-to-do business man. He told us that he had very recently paid a ransom of five thousand Kabulis for his freedom to the very outlaws. "How did you happen to fall into their trap ?" I asked.

"'Sahib, I was one day sitting in my house when one of the outlaws came to see me. He told me that there was a very paying business going a-begging, and that if I would accompany him I might make a fortune. He asked me to take my son, a young boy of ten, and my servant with me, as it was just possible it might take some time to come to terms. Like a greedy man I at-once followed him, taking my son and my servant with me. After a short distance the outlaw was followed by four men of his. I even then did not suspect any foul play. 'What is the good of the Seth's boy and the servant accompanying us?' said one of them. If it gets late to settle the business I will bring Sethji back to his place, he added.

"Yes, you are right. Sethji, better send away your boy and the servant", said the outlaw.

"I complied with his wishes. After walking for about an hour we came to a small village, where we halted to have little rest. The outlaw turned round and told me that he was a thief and that he had kidnapped me to get some money out of me. If I did not arrange for the money I would be shot. I shuddered at the disclosure but what could I do except comply with his demand? I had perforce to agree to the payment of the high ransom exacted from me. So I wrote a note to my Munim (agent) to send me 5000 Kabulis to enable me to strike the bargain. One of the followers of the outlaw took the note to my shop. As my servant and my son had heard the conversation between the outlaw and myself about the "so-called business" the Munim

readily paid the money without suspecting any mischief. The money was brought and I was set at liberty to return to my house. When I came back my Munim wanted to know the nature of the business as well as about the amount spent on it. I made a clean breast of my having been made a fool, but had to thank my stars for being saved even at a very exhorbitant cost,' was the story told to us."

And so to save himself and his family from being molested by this robber king, Amanullah Khan, thought it advisable to relinquish his claim to the throne and pass it on to his elder brother Sardar Anayatullah Khan, who was the rightful heir to the throne of Afghanistan, being the eldest son of his father Amir Habibullah Khan. This handsome and loving Prince evidently was no match for Baccha-e-Saqa. When I came in contact with Sardar Anayatullah Khan at Kabul, I always thought he made an excellent friend and a keen sportsman, but his young brother Amanullah Khan, was better suited to rule. Anayatullah Khan's reign lasted for three days only and he too had eventually to flee from his capital, and join his younger brother. In spite of his best endeavours to regain power, Amanullah had no great support in his own country, and had therefore eventually to bow down his head to the inevitable and to proceed to Italy, exiled from his people and country. As said before, his grandfather was exiled from his own country in Russia for over ten years, and may we not hope that history may repeat itself in case of his grandson for the benefit of the nation and the country itself? Inshallah, it will!

CHAPTER XIII

AFGHANISTAN'S TREATY WITH THE BRITISH

SIGNED AT KABUL, NOVEMBER 22ND, 1921

(Ratifications exchanged at Kabul, February 6th, 1922)

PREAMBLE.—The British Government and the Government of Afghanistan, with a view to the establishment of neighbourly relations between them, have agreed to the Articles written hereunder whereto the undersigned duly authorised to that effect have set their seals:

ARTICLE 1.—The British Government and the Government of Afghanistan mutually certify and respect each with regard to the other all rights of internal and external independence.

ARTICLE 2.—The two High Contracting Parties mutually accept the Indo-Afghan Frontier as accepted by the Afghan Government under Article 5 of the treaty concluded at Rawalpindi on the 8th August, 1919, corresponding to the 11th Ziqada, 1337 Hijra, and also the boundary west of the Khyber laid down by the British Commission in the months of August and September 1919, pursuant to the said Article, and shown on the map attached to this treaty by a black chain line; subject only to the re-alignment set forth in Schedule I annexed, which has been agreed upon in order to include within the boundaries of Afghanistan the place known as Tor-Kham, and the whole bed of the Kabul river between Shilman Khwala Banda and Palosai and which is shown on the said

map by a red chain line. The British Government agrees that the Afghan authorities shall be permitted to draw water in reasonable quantities through a pipe which shall be provided by the British Government from Landi Khana for the use of Afghan subjects at Tor-Kham, and the Government of Afghanistan agrees that British Officers and tribesmen living on the British side of the boundary shall be permitted without let or hindrance to use the aforesaid portion of the Kabul river for purposes of navigation and that all existing rights of irrigation from the aforesaid portion of the river shall be continued to British subjects.

ARTICLE 3.—The British Government agrees that a Minister from His Majesty the Ameer of Afghanistan shall be received at the Royal Court of London like the Envoys of all other Powers, and to permit the establishment of an Afghan Legation in London, and the Government of Afghanistan likewise agrees to receive in Kabul a Minister from His Britannic Majesty the Emperor of India and to permit the establishment of a British Legation at Kabul.

Each party shall have the right of appointing a Military Attache to its Legation.

ARTICLE 4.—The Government of Afghanistan agrees to the establishment of British Consulates at Kandahar and Jallalabad, and the British Government agrees to the establishment of an Afghan Consul-General at the headquarters of the Government of India and three Afghan Consulates at Calcutta, Karachi, and Bombay. In the event of the Afghan

Government desiring at any time to appoint Consular officers in any British territories other than India a separate agreement shall be drawn up to provide for such appointments if they are approved by the British Government.

ARTICLE 5.—The two High Contracting Parties mutually guarantee the personal safety and honourable treatment each of the representatives of the other, whether Minister, Consul-General, or Consuls within their own boundaries, and they agree that the said representatives shall be subject in the discharge of their duties to the provisions set forth in the second schedule annexed to this treaty. The British Government further agrees that the Minister, Consul-General, and Consuls of Afghanistan shall, within the territorial limits within which they are permitted to reside or to exercise their functions, notwithstanding the provisions of the said schedule, receive and enjoy any rights or privileges which are or may hereafter be granted to or enjoyed by the Minister, Consul-General, or Consuls of any other Government in the countries in which the places of residence of the said Minister, Consul-General, and Consuls of Afghanistan are fixed; and the Government of Afghanistan likewise agrees that the Minister and Consuls of Great Britain shall within the territorial limits within which they are permitted to reside or to exercise their functions, notwithstanding the provisions of the said schedule, receive and enjoy any rights or privileges, which are or may hereafter be granted to or enjoyed

by the Minister or Consuls of any other Government in the countries in which the places of residence of the said Minister and Consuls of Great Britain are fixed.

ARTICLE 6.—As it is for the benefit of the British Government and the Government of Afghanistan that the Government of Afghanistan shall be strong and prosperous, the British Government agrees that whatever quantity of material is required for the strength and welfare of Afghanistan, such as all kinds of factory machinery, engines and materials and instruments for telegraph, telephones, etc., which Afghanistan may be able to buy from Britain or the British dominions or from other countries of the world, shall ordinarily be imported without let or hindrance by Afghanistan into its own territories from the ports of the British Isles and British India. Similarly the Government of Afghanistan agrees that every kind of goods, the export of which is not against the internal law of the Government of Afghanistan and which may in the judgment of the Government of Afghanistan be in excess of the internal needs and requirements of Afghanistan and is required by the British Government, can be purchased and exported to India with the permission of the Government of Afghanistan. With regard to arms and munitions, the British Government agrees that as long as it is assured that the intentions of the Government of Afghanistan are friendly and that there is no immediate danger to India from such importation in Afghanistan, permission shall be given without let or hindrance for such

importation. If, however, the Arms Traffic Convention is hereafter ratified by the Great Powers of the world and comes into force, the right of importation of arms and munitions by the Afghan Government shall be subject to the proviso that the Afghan Government shall first have signed the Arms Traffic Convention, and that such importation shall only be made in accordance with the provisions of that Convention. Should the Arms Traffic Convention not be ratified or lapse, the Government of Afghanistan, subject to the foregoing assurance, can from time to time import into its own territory, the arms and munitions mentioned above through the ports of the British Isles and British India.

ARTICLE 7.—No Customs duties shall be levied at British Indian ports on goods imported under the provisions of Article 6 on behalf of the Government of Afghanistan, for immediate transport to Afghanistan, provided that a certificate signed by such Afghan authority or representative as may from time to time be determined by the two Governments shall be presented at the time of importation to the Chief Customs Officer at the port of import setting forth that the goods in question are the property of the Government of Afghanistan and are being sent under its orders to Afghanistan, and showing the description, number and value of the goods in respect of which exemption is claimed; provided, secondly, that the goods are required for the public services of Afghanistan and not for the purposes of any State monopoly or State trade; and provided, thirdly,

that the goods are, unless of a clearly distinguishable nature, transported through India in sealed packages, which shall not be opened or sub-divided before their export from India.

And also the British Government agrees to the grant in respect of all trade goods imported into India at British ports for re-export to Afghanistan and exported to Afghanistan by routes to be agreed upon between the two Governments of a rebate at the time and place of export of the full amount of Customs duty levied upon such goods, provided that such goods shall be transported through India in sealed packages which shall not be opened or sub-divided before their export from India.

And also the British Government declares that it has no present intention of levying Customs duty on goods or livestock of Afghan origin or manufacture, imported by land or by river into India or exported from Afghanistan to other countries of the world through India and the import of which into India is not prohibited by law. In the event, however, of the British Government deciding in the future to levy Customs duties on goods and livestock imported into India by land or by river from neighbouring States, it will, if necessary, levy such duties on imports from Afghanistan; but in that event it agrees that it will not levy higher duties on imports from Afghanistan than those levied on imports from such neighbouring states. Nothing in this article shall prevent the levy on imports from Afghanistan of the

present Khyber tolls and of octroi in any town of India in which octroi is or may be hereafter levied, provided that there shall be no enhancement over the present rate of the Khyber tolls.

ARTICLE 8.—The British Government agrees to the establishment of trade agents by the Afghan Government at Peshawar, Quetta, and Parachinar, provided that the personnel and the property of the said agencies shall be subject to the operations of all British laws and orders and to the jurisdiction of British Courts; and that they shall not be recognised by the British authorities as having any official or special privileged position.

ARTICLE 9.—The trade goods coming to (imported to) Afghanistan under the provisions of Article 7 from Europe, etc., can be opened at the railway termini at Jamrud, in the Kurram and at Chaman for packing and arranging to suit the capacity of baggage animals without this being the cause of reimposition of Customs duties; and the carrying out of this will be arranged by the trade representatives mentioned in Article 12.

ARTICLE 10.—The two High Contracting Parties agree to afford facilities of every description for the exchange of postal matter between their two countries, provided that neither shall be authorised to establish Post Offices within the territory of the other. In order to give effect to this Article, a separate Postal Convention shall be concluded, for the preparation of which such number of special

officers as the Afghan Government may appoint shall meet the officers of the British Government and consult with them.

ARTICLE 11.—The two High Contracting Parties having mutually satisfied themselves each regarding the goodwill of the other, and especially regarding their benevolent intentions towards the tribes residing close to their respective boundaries, hereby undertake each to inform the other in future of any military operations of major importance which may appear necessary for the maintenance of order among the frontier tribes residing within their respective spheres, before the commencement of such operations.

ARTICLE 12.—The two High Contracting Parties agree that representatives of the Government of Afghanistan and of the British Government shall be appointed to discuss the conclusion of a Trade Convention, and the convention shall in the first place be regarding the measures (necessary) for carrying out the purposes mentioned in Article 9 of this treaty. Secondly, (They) shall arrange regarding commercial matters not now mentioned in this treaty which may appear desirable for the benefit of the two Governments. The trade relations between the two Governments shall continue until the Trade Convention mentioned above comes into force.

ARTICLE 13.—The two High Contracting Parties agree that the first and second schedules

attached to this treaty shall have the same binding force as the Articles contained in this treaty.

ARTICLE 14.—The provisions of this treaty shall come into force from the date of its signature, and shall remain in force for three years from that date. In case neither of the High Contracting Parties should have notified twelve months before the expiration of the said three years the intention to terminate it, it shall remain binding until the expiration of one year from the day on which either of the High Contracting Parties shall have denounced it. This treaty shall come into force after the signatures of the Missions of the two Parties and the two ratified copies of this shall be exchanged in Kabul within 2½ months after the signatures.

(SD.) MAHMUD TARZI,	(SD.) HENRY R. C. DOBBS,
Chief of the Delegation of the Afghan Government for the conclusion of the Treaty.	Envoy Extraordinary and Chief of the British Mission to Kabul.
Tuesday, 30th Aqrab 1300 Kijra Shamsi (corresponding to 22nd November, 1921).	This twenty-second day of November one thousand nine hundred and twenty-one.

SCHEDULE I.

(REFERRED TO IN ARTICLE 2).

In the nulla bed running from Landhi Khana to Painda Khak Post, the Afghan frontier has been

advanced approximately 700 yards, and the Tor Kham Ridge, including Shamsa Kandao and Shamsa Kandao Sar, is comprised in Afghan territory. Further, the Afghan frontier has been advanced between the point where the present boundary joins the Kabul river and Palosai from the centre of the river to the right bank.

SCHEDULE II.

Legations and Consulates.

(a) The Legations, Consulate-General, and Consulates of the two High Contracting Parties shall at no time be used as places of refuge for political or ordinary offenders or as places of assembly for the furtherance of seditious or criminal movements or as magazines of arms.

(b) The Minister of His Britannic Majesty at the Court of Kabul shall, together with his family, Secretaries, Assistants, Attaches, and any of his menial or domestic servants or his couriers who are British subjects, be exempt from the civil jurisdiction of the Afghan Government, provided that he shall furnish from time to time to the Afghan Government a list of persons in respect of whom such exemption is claimed, and, under a like proviso, the Minister of the Ameer to the Royal Court of London to which all the Ambassadors of States are accredited shall, together with his family, Secretaries, Assistants, Attaches, and any of his menial or domestic servants or his couriers who are Afghan subjects, be exempt from the civil jurisdiction of Great Britain. If an offence or crime is

committed by an Afghan subject against the British Minister or the persons above mentioned who are attached to the British Legation, the case shall be tried according to the local law by the Courts of Afghanistan within whose jurisdiction the offence is committed, and the same procedure shall be observed *vice versa* with regard to offences committed in England by British subjects against the Afghan Minister or other persons above mentioned attached to the Afghan Legation.

(c) (i) A Consul-General, Consuls, and members of their staffs and households, who are subjects of the State in which they are employed, shall remain subject in all respects to the jurisdiction, laws, and regulations of such State.

(ii) A Consul-General, Consuls, and members of their staffs and households, other than subjects of the State in which they are employed, shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Courts of such State, in respect of any criminal offence committed against the Government or subjects of such State, provided that no Consul-General, Consul, or member of their staff or household shall suffer any punishment other than fine; provided also that both Governments retain always the right to demand recall from their dominions of any Consul-General, Consul, or member of their staff or household.

(iii) A Consul-General, Consuls, and members of their staffs and households, other than subjects

of the State in which they are employed, shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Courts of the said State in respect of any civil cause of action arising in the territory of the said State, provided that they shall enjoy the customary facilities for the performance of their duties.

(iv) The Consul-General of Afghanistan and Consuls shall have a right to defend the interests of themselves or any members of their staffs and households who are subjects of their own Governments in any Court through pleaders or by the presence of one of the consulate officials, with due regard to local procedure and laws.

(d) The Ministers, Consul-General, and Consuls of the two High Contracting Parties and the members of their staffs and households shall not take any steps or commit any acts injurious to the interests of the Government of the country to which they are accredited.

(e) The Ministers, Consul-General, and Consuls of the two Governments in either country shall be permitted to purchase or hire on behalf of their Governments residences for themselves and their staff and servants, or sites sufficient and suitable for the erection of such residence and grounds of a convenient size attached, and the respective Governments shall give all possible assistance towards such purchase or hire; provided that the Government of the country to which the Ministers or Consuls are accredited shall, in the event of an Embassy or Consulate being

permanently withdrawn, have the right to acquire such residence or lands at a price to be mutually agreed on; and provided that the site purchased or hired shall not exceed 20 jaribs in area.

NOTE :—Each Jarib = 60 × 60 yards, English 3,600 sq. yards.

(f) The Ministers, Consul-General, and Consuls of the two Governments shall not acquire any immovable property in the country to which they are accredited without the permission of the Government of the said country.

(g) Neither of the two High Contracting Parties shall found a mosque, church, or temple for the use of the public inside any of its Legations or Consulates, nor shall the Ministers, Consul-General, or Consuls of either Government or their Secretaries or members of their staffs and households engage in any political agitation or movement within the country to which they are accredited or in which they are residing.

(h) The Ministers, Consul-General, and Consuls of the two High Contracting Parties shall not grant naturalisation or passports or certificates of nationality or other documents of indentity to the subjects of the country in which they are employed in such capacity.

(i) The Ministers of the two High Contracting Parties, besides their own wives and children, may have with them not more than thirty-five persons,

and a Consul-General and Consuls, besides their own wives and children, not more than twenty persons. If it becomes necessary to employ in addition subjects of the Government of the country to which they are accredited, Ministers can employ not more than ten persons and Consul-General and Consuls not more than five persons.

(j) The Ministers, Consul-General, and Consuls of the two High Contracting Parties shall be at liberty to communicate freely with their own Government and with other official representatives of their Government in other countries by post, by telegraph, and by wireless telegraphy in cypher or *en clair*, and to receive and despatch sealed bags by courier or post, subject to a limitation in the case of Ministers of 6 lb. per week, and in the case of a Consul-General and Consuls of 4 lb. per week, which shall be exempt from postal charges and examination, and the safe transmission of which shall, in the case of bags sent by post, be guaranteed by the Postal Departments of the two Governments.

(k) Each of the two Governments shall exempt from the payment of Customs or other duties all articles imported within its boundaries in reasonable quantities for the personal use of the Minister of the other Government or of his family, provided that a certificate is furnished by the Minister at the time of importation that the articles are intended for such personal use.

APPENDIX

I. Letter from British Representative to Sardar-i-Ala, the Afghan Foreign Minister.

(After compliments).

With reference to the provisions contained in Article 6 of the treaty concluded between the Government of Afghanistan and the British Government regarding the importation of arms and munitions into Afghanistan through India, I have the honour to inform and assure you that, although the British Government has in that article reserved to itself the right exercised by every nation to stop the transportation to a neighbouring country of arms and munitions, in the event of its not being assured of the friendly intentions of that country, the British Government has no desire to make trifling incidents an excuse for the stoppage of such arms and munitions. It would only be in the event of the Government of Afghanistan showing plainly by its attitude that it had determined on an unfriendly and provocative course of policy towards Great Britain contrary to the neighbourly treaty above mentioned that the latter State would exercise the right of stoppage. There is every ground for hope that such a contingency will never arise, in view of the friendly relations which are expected to spring from the treaty which has now been concluded.

(usual ending).

II.—Letter No. 112, from Sardar-i-Ala, the Afghan Foreign Minister, to the British Representative at Kabul.

(After compliments).

Regarding the purchase of arms and munitions which the Government of Afghanistan buys for the protection of its rights and welfare, from the Governments of the world (and) imports to its own territory from the ports of Great Britain and British India, in accordance with Article 6 of the treaty between the two great Governments, I, in order to show the sincere friendship which my Government has with your Government, promise that Afghanistan shall, from time to time before the importation of the arms and munitions at British ports, furnish detailed list of those to the British Minister accredited to the Court of my sacred and great Government, so that the British Government having known and acquainted itself with the list and the number of imported articles should, in accordance with Article 6 of the treaty between the two Governments, afford the necessary facilities.

(usual ending).

Dated, 29th Aqrab, A. H. 1300.

III.—Letter No. 111, from Sardar-i-Ala, the Afghan Foreign Minister, to the British Representative at Kabul.

(After compliments).

As in Article 7 of the treaty (between) the two great Governments of Britain and Afghanistan, your Government has with great sincerity granted a discriminating exemption from Custom duties on the goods required by my Government and on the trade goods transported to Afghanistan through the ports of Great Britain and British India and has not imposed Customs on goods produced and manufactured in Afghanistan, I therefore also, in consideration of the friendship (between) the two Governments, write that my Government will not give the opportunity of establishing a Consul-General or Consul or representatives of the Russian Government at the positions and territories of Jelallabad, Ghaznee, and Kandahar, which are contiguous to the frontiers of India. If the Consulates or representatives of the Government of Russia are allowed in the parts mentioned, the Government of Afghanistan shall not have the abovementioned right of exemption. Of course, the temporary association of the Russian Minister with his Majesty's move to Jelallabad in winter will be an exception.

(usual ending).

Dated, 30th Aqrab, A. H. 1300.

IV.—Letter from British Representative to Sardar-i-Ala, the Afghan Foreign Minister.

(After compliments).

As the conditions of the frontier tribes of the two Governments are of interest to the Government

of Afghanistan, I inform you that the British Government entertains feelings of good-will towards all the frontier tribes and has every intention of treating them generously, provided they abstain from outrages against the inhabitants of India. I hope that this letter will cause you satisfaction.

(usual ending).

The following Treaty of Peace, between Amanullah Khan and the British on 8th August 1919, is briefly reproduced for general information of the reader :—

ARTICLE 1.—From the date of the signing of this Treaty there shall be peace between the British Government, on the one part, and the Government of Afghanistan on the other.

ARTICLE 2.—In view of the circumstances which have brought about the present war between the British Government and the Government of Afghanistan, the British Government to mark their displeasure, withdraw the privilege enjoyed by former Amirs of importing arms, ammunition or warlike munitions through India to Afghanistan.

ARTICLE 3.—The arrears of the late Amir's subsidy are furthermore confiscated, and no subsidy is granted to the present Amir.

ARTICLE 4.—At the same time, the British Government are desirous of the re-establishment of the

old friendship that has so long existed between Afghanistan and Great Britain, provided they have guarantees that the Afghan Government are, on their part, sincerely anxious to regain the friendship of the British Government. The British Government are prepared, therefore, provided the Afghan Government prove this by their acts and conduct, to receive another Afghan mission after six months for the discussion and settlement of matters of common interest to the two Governments and the re-establishment of the old friendship on a satisfactory basis.

ARTICLE 5.—The Afghan Government accept the Indo-Afghan frontier accepted by the late Amir. They further agree to the early demarcation by a British Commission of the undemarcated portion of the line west of the Khyber, where the present Afghan aggression took place, and to accept such boundary as the British Commission may lay down. The British troops in this side will remain on their present positions until such demarcation has been effected.

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